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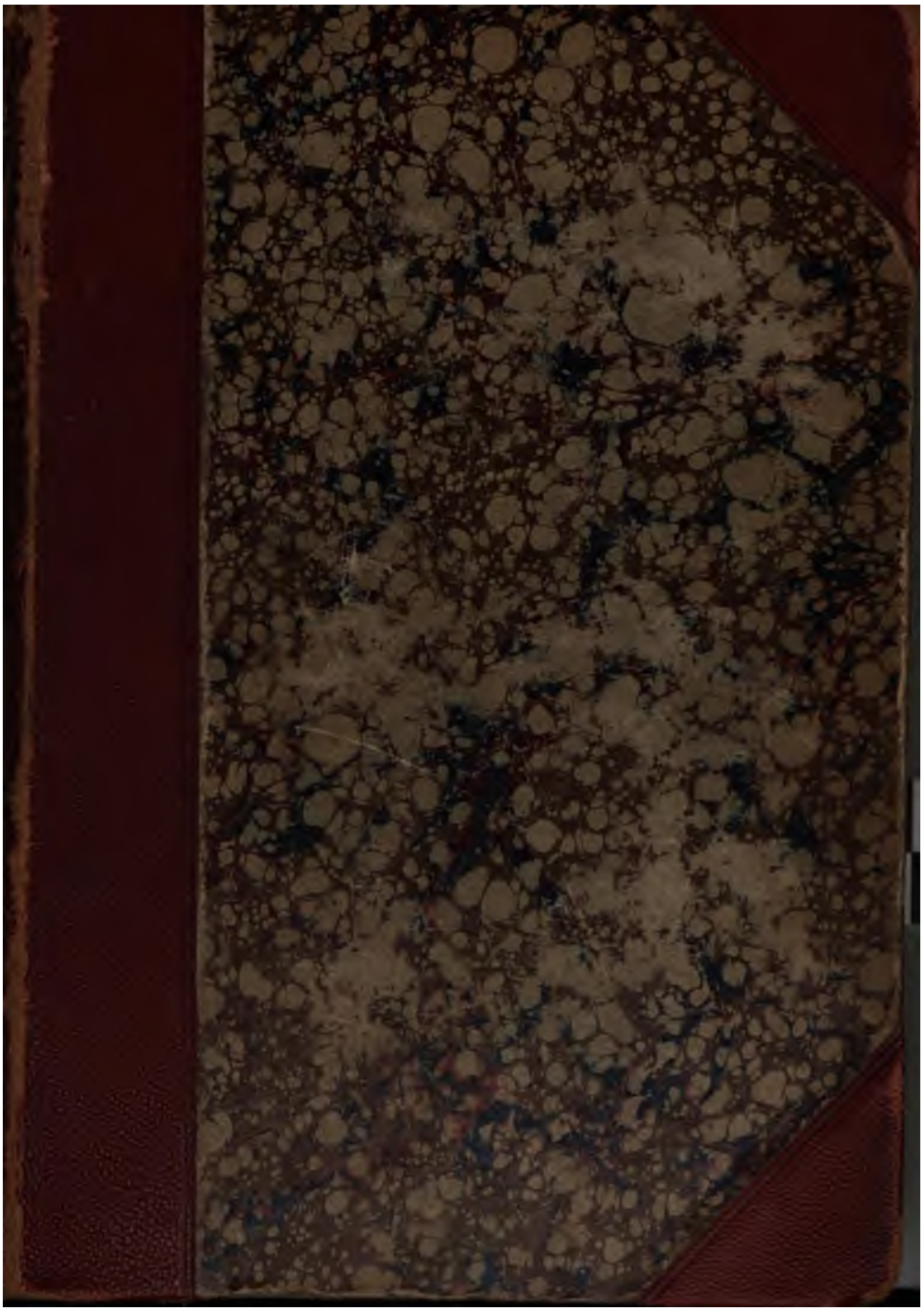

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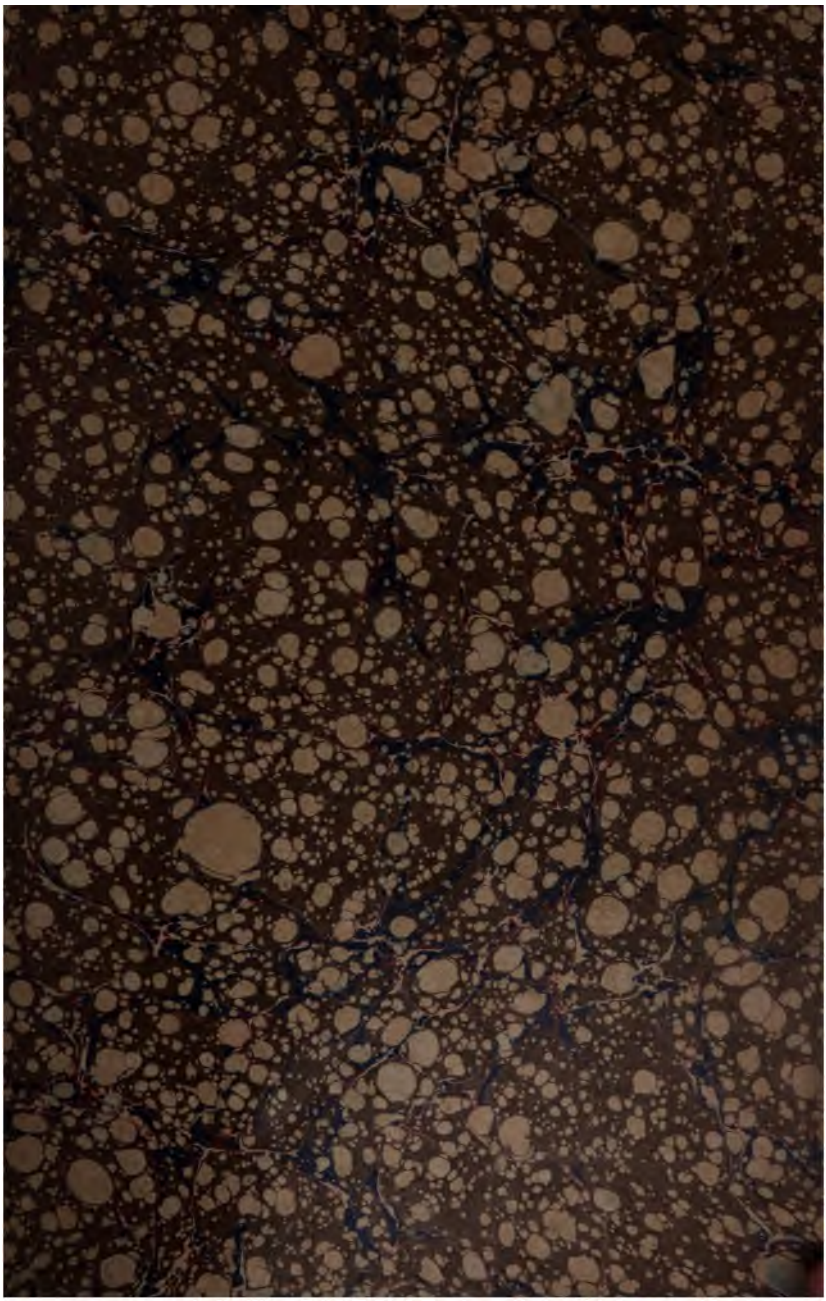

WORKS OF MONTAIGNE.

WORKS

OF

MICHAEL DE MONTAIGNE.

COMPRISING

HIS ESSAYS, JOURNEY INTO ITALY, AND LETTERS, WITH NOTES FROM ALL THE COMMENTATORS, BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES, ETC.

By W. HAZLITT.

A NEW AND CAREFULLY REVISED EDITION,

EDITED BY

O. W. WIGHT.

Viresque acquirit eundo.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYS.

THE SECOND BOOK.

[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER III.

THE CUSTOM OF THE ISLE OF CEA.

If, according to the common definition, to philosophize is to doubt, much more ought writing at random, and playing the fool, as I do, to be reputed doubting; for it is the business of novices and freshmen to inquire and dispute, and that of the chairman to determine. My moderator is the authority of the divine will, which governs us without contradiction, and which is seated above these vain and human contests. To philosophize, what.

Philip[1] having entered the Peloponnesus in arms, some one said to Damindas that the Lacedemonians were likely to be very great sufferers if they did not reconcile themselves to his favour. "Coward!" replied he, "what can they suffer that do not fear to die?" It was asked of Agis, which way a man might live free? "By despising death," said he. These, and a thousand other sayings, to the same purpose, evidently refer to something more than a patient waiting the

[1] This and the four following instances are taken from Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedemonians.*

stroke of death when it shall come; for there are many misfortunes in life far worse to suffer than death itself. Witness the Lacedemonian boy, taken by Antigonus, and sold for a slave, who, being by his new master commanded to some base employment: "Thou shalt see," says the boy, "whom thou hast bought; it would be a shame for me to serve, being within reach of liberty;" and, having so said, threw himself from the top of the house. Antipater severely threatening the Lacedemonians, in order to make them acquiesce in a certain demand of his: "If thou threaten us with more than death," replied they, "we shall the more willingly die." And to Philip, having writ them word that he would frustrate all their enterprises: "What? wilt thou also hinder us from dying?" This is the meaning of the sentence, "That the wise man lives as long as he ought, not so long as he can;"[1] and that the most obliging present Nature has made us, and which takes from us all colour of complaint of our condition, is to have delivered into our own custody the keys of life. She has only ordered one door into life, but a hundred thousand out of it. We may be straightened for earth to live upon, but earth sufficient to die upon can never be wanting; as Bojocalus answered the Romans.[2] Why dost thou complain of this world? it detains thee not. If thou livest in pain, thy own cowardice is the cause. There remains no more to die, but to be willing to die:—

Many misfortunes worse to suffer than death.

Death depends upon the will.

Ubique mors est; optime hoc cavit Deus.
Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest;
At nemo mortem; mille ad hanc aditus patent.[3]

"Tender of human woes, indulgent fate
Has left to death an ever-open gate;
There's not a person on the earth but may
Make any fellow-creature's life away;
And any man that will may yield his breath,
There are a thousand ways that lead to death."

Neither is it a recipe for one disease; death does not

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 70.
[2] Tacitus, *Annal.* xiii. 56.
[3] Seneca, *Thebaid*, i. 1, 151.

merely relieve us of one particular malady, 'tis the infallible cure of all, an assured port that is never to be feared, and very often to be sought; it comes all to one point, whether a man gives himself his end, or stays to receive it; whether he pays before his day, or stay till his day of payment comes. Whencesoever it comes, it is still his; in what part soever the thread breaks, there's the end of the clue; the most voluntary death is the finest. Life depends upon the will of others, death upon our own. There is nothing in which we ought not to accommodate ourselves to our own humour so much as in that. Reputation is not concerned in such an enterprise; and it's a folly to be diverted by any such apprehensions. Living is slavery, if the liberty of dying be away. The ordinary method of cure is carried on at the expense of life; they torment us with caustics, incisions, and amputations of limbs, interdicting aliments, and exhausting our blood; one step further, and we are cured indeed. Why is not the *jugular* vein as much at our disposal as the *median*?[1] For a desperate disease, a desperate cure. Servius, the grammarian, having the gout, could advise of no better remedy than to apply poison to his legs to deprive them of their sense;[2] let them be gouty if they will, so they are but insensible of pain. God gives us leave enough, when he is pleased to reduce us to such a condition that to live is far worse than to die. 'Tis weakness to truckle under infirmities, but 'tis madness to cherish them. The Stoics say[3] that it is living according to nature in a wise man to take his leave of life even in the height of prosperity, provided he does it opportunely; and in a fool to prolong it though he be miserable, if he is not indigent of those things which are reputed the necessaries of life. As I do not offend the law provided against thieves when I embezzle my own money and cut my own purse, nor that against incendiaries, when I burn my own wood; so am I not under the lash of

[1] Seneca. *Epist.* 69 and 70: whence the greater part of these remarks are taken.

[2] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxv. 3. Suetonius, *de Illust. Gramm.* c. 2.

[3] Cicero, *de Finibus*, iii. 18.

those made against murderers, for having deprived myself of my own life. Hegesias said, that as the condition of life did, so the condition of death ought to depend upon our own choice.[1] And Diogenes, meeting the philosopher Speusippus, so blown up with an inveterate dropsy that he was fain to be carried in a litter, and being by him saluted with "Health to thee, Diogenes;" "No health to thee," replied the other, "who consentest to live in such a condition." And in truth, not long after, Speusippus, weary of so languishing a state of life, killed himself.[2]

Suicide prohibited by God, and to be punished in the other world.

But this does not pass without admitting a dispute; for many are of opinion that we cannot quit this garrison of the world without express command of him who has placed us in it; and that it belongs to God alone, who has placed us here, not for ourselves only, but for his glory and the service of others, to dismiss us when it shall best please him, and not for us to depart without his license; that we are not born for ourselves only, but for our country also, the laws of which require an account from us, upon the score of their own interest, and have an action of manslaughter good against us; or, if these fail to take cognizance of the fact, we are punished in the other world as deserters of our duty:—

> Proxima deinde tenent mœsti loca, qui sibi lethum
> Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
> Projecere animas.[3]
>
> "The next in place and punishment are they
> Who prodigally threw their souls away—
> Fools, who, repining at their wretched state,
> And loathing anxious life, suborned their fate."

There is more constancy in suffering the chain we are tied in than in breaking it, and more evidence of fortitude in Regulus than in Cato. 'Tis indiscretion and impatience that pushes us on. No misfortunes can make true virtue turn her back; she seeks and requires pain and grief as her aliment.

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*. [2] Id. *ib*. [3] *Æneid*, vi. 434.

The menaces of tyrants, racks, and tortures, serve only to animate and rouse her;

Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus
Nigræ feraci frondis in Algido,
Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animumque ferro: [1]

"Are like an oak upon the wooden top
Of shaded Algidus, bestrew'd with leaves,
Which, as keen axes its green honours lop,
Through wounds, through losses, no decay can feel,
Collecting strength and spirit from the steel."

And, as the other says,

Non est, ut putas, virtus, pater,
Timere vitam; sed malis ingentibus
Obstare, nec se vertere, ac retro dare.[2]

"That fear to live is virtue, you contend,
This point, my father, you can ne'er defend:
That's virtue which can evils great withstand,
And not retreat, nor shift to either hand."

Or as this:—

Rebus in adversis facile est contemnere mortem:
Fortius ille facit, qui miser esse potest.[3]

"The wretched well may laugh at death, but he
Is braver far can live in misery."

'Tis cowardice, not virtue, to lie squat in a furrow under a tomb, to evade the blows of fortune. Virtue never stops nor goes out of her path for the greatest storm that blows:—

Si fractus illabatur orbis
Impavidam ferient ruinæ.[4]

"Nor would the wreck his mind appal,
Should the whole world to swift destruction fall."

And for the most part, the flying of other inconveniences brings us to this; endeavouring to evade death, we run into the jaws of it:—

Hic, rogo, non furor est, ne moriare, mori? [5]

"Can there be greater madness, pray reply,
Than that one should for fear of dying die?"

[1] Horace, *Od.* iv. 4. 57.
[2] Seneca, *Thebaid.* i verse 190.
[3] Martial, xi. 56, 15.
[4] Horace, *Od.* iii. 3. 7.
[5] Martial, ii. 80, 2.

like those who, for fear of a precipice, throw themselves headlong into it:—

Multos in summa pericula misit
Venturi timor ipse mali: fortissimus ille est,
Qui, promptus metuenda pati si cominus instent,
Et differre potest.[1]

"The fear of future ills oft makes men run
Into far worse than those they strive to shun;
But he deserves the noblest character,
Dares boldly stand the mischiefs he doth fear,
When they confront him, and appear in view,
And can defer at least if not eschew."

Usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitæ
Percipit humanos odium, lucisque videndæ,
Ut sibi consciscant mœrenti pectore lethum,
Obliti fontem curarum hunc esse timorem.[2]

"Death unto that degree doth some men fright,
That, causing them to hate both life and light,
They kill themselves, thus seeming not aware
That this same fear's the fountain of their care."

Plato, in his Laws,[3] assigns an ignominious sepulture to him who has deprived his nearest and best friend, namely himself, of life and his destined course of years, being neither compelled so to do by public judgment, by any sad and inevitable accident of fortune, nor by any insupportable disgrace, but merely pushed on by the cowardice and imbecility of a timorous soul. And the opinion that makes so little of life is ridiculous; for it is our being, 'tis all we have. Things of a nobler and more elevated being may indeed accuse this of ours; but it is against nature for us to contemn and make little account of ourselves; 'tis a disease particular to man, and not seen in any other creatures, to hate and despise itself. It is a vanity of the same stamp, to desire to be something else than what we are. The effects of such a desire do not touch us, forasmuch as it is contradicted and hindered in itself. He that desires to be changed from man into angel does nothing for himself; he would be never the

[1] Luc. vii. 104. [2] Lucret. iii 79. [3] Book ix.

better for it; for being no more who would there be to rejoice, or even be sensible of this benefit for him?

> Debet enim, misere cui forte ægreque futurum est,
> Ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cum male possit
> Accidere.[1]
>
> "For whosoe'er in misery is to live,
> Must BE whene'er that misery shall arrive."

Security, indolence, impassibility, and the privation of the evils of life, which we pretend to purchase at the price of dying, are of no manner of advantage to us. That man evades war to very little purpose that can have no fruition of peace. And for as little does he avoid toil who cannot enjoy repose.

Amongst those of the first of these two opinions, there has been great debate; what occasions are sufficient to justify the determination to kill one's self, which they call εὔλογον ἐξαγωγήν,[2] "a reasonable handsome exit;" for though they say that men may die from trivial causes, seeing those that detain us in life are of no very great weight; yet there is to be some limit to this. There are fantastic and senseless humours that have prompted not only particular men, but whole nations, to destroy themselves, of which I have elsewhere given some examples; and we further read of the Milesian virgins that by an insane compact they hanged themselves, one after another, till the magistrate took order in it, enacting that the bodies of such as should be found so hanged should be drawn by the same halter, stark naked through the city.[3] When Theryçion expected Cleomenes to dispatch himself, by reason of the ill posture of his affairs, and having evaded the death of most honour in the battle he had lost, to accept of this, the second in honour to it, and not to give the conquerors opportunity to make him undergo either an ignominious death or an infamous life; Cleomenes, with a courage truly stoic and

What are the justest reasons for suicide.

[1] Lucret. iii. 874.

[2] This was the expression of the Stoics, see Diogenes Laertius, vii. 130.

[3] Plutarch, *On the virtuous deeds of Women.*

Lacedemonian, rejected his counsel as unmanly and poor: "That," said he, "is a remedy that can never be wanting, and which a man never should make use of while there is an inch of hope remaining;" telling him "that it sometimes showed firmness and valour to live; that he would that even his death should be of use to his country; and that he would make of it an act of honour and virtue."[1] Therycion thought himself in the right, and did his own business; and Cleomenes after did the same, but not till he had first tried the utmost malevolence of fortune. All the inconveniences in the world are not considerable enough that a man should die to evade them; and, besides there being so many sudden changes in human things, it is hard rightly to judge when we are at the end of our hope:—

> Sperat et in sævâ victus gladiator arenâ,
> Sit licet infesto pollice turba minax.[2]
>
> "The fencer conquer'd in the lists hopes on,
> Though the turn'd thumb commands him to be gone."

All things, says the old adage, are to be hoped for by a man whilst he lives. "Aye," replies Seneca, "but why should this rather be always running in a man's head that fortune can do all things for the living man, than this, that fortune has no power over him that knows how to die?"[3] We see Josephus when engaged in near and apparent danger, a whole people being risen up against him, and no visible means of escape, and being, as himself says,[4] in this extremity counselled by one of his friends to dispatch himself, yet do well to maintain himself in hope; for fortune, beyond all human expectation, so changed the face of things that he saw himself delivered without any manner of inconvenience.

Deaths fatal by having been precipitant.

Whereas Brutus and Cassius, on the contrary, threw away the remains of the Roman liberty, of which they were the sole protectors, by the

[1] Plutarch. *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes*, c. 14.
[2] Pentadius, *De Spe. apud Virgil. Catalecta.*
[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 70.
[4] In his *Life*, p. 1009.

precipitation and temerity wherewith they killed themselves before the proper time and occasion. Monsieur d'Anguien, at the battle of Serisolles, twice attempted to cut his throat, despairing of the fortune of the day, which went, indeed, very untowardly on that side of the field where he was engaged, and by that precipitation was very near depriving himself of the joy and honour of so glorious a victory.[1] I have seen a hundred hares escape out of the very teeth of the greyhounds; *Aliquis carnifici suo superstes fuit.* "Some have survived their intended executioners."

> Multa dies, variusque labor mutabilis ævi,
> Retulit in melius: multos alterna revisens
> Lusit, et in solido rursus fortuna locavit.[2]
>
> "Good unexpected, evils unforeseen,
> Appear in turns as fortune shifts the scene.
> Some, raised aloft, come tumbling down amain,
> Then fall so hard they bound and rise again."

Pliny says there are only three sorts of diseases, to escape any of which a man has good title to destroy himself; the worst of which is the stone in the bladder, when the urine is suppressed.[3] Seneca says those only which for a long time discompose the functions of the soul. Some there have been who, to avoid a worse, have chosen a death of their own liking. Democritus, general of the Ætolians, being brought prisoner to Rome, found means to make his escape by night; but being closely pursued by his keepers, rather than suffer himself to be retaken, he fell upon his own sword and died.[4] Antinöus and Theodotus, their city of Epirus being reduced by the Romans to the last extremity, gave the people counsel to kill themselves; but the advice of giving themselves up to the

What causes may induce a man to kill himself.

[1] Montluc's *Commentaires*. The battle was fought in 1544.

[2] *Æneid*, xi. 425.

[3] "In the quarto edition of these Essays, in 1588," remarks M. Coste, "Pliny is said to mention two more, viz: a pain in the stomach, and the headache, which, he says, lib. xxv. cap. 3, were the only three distempers almost, for which men killed themselves. As to their right of killing themselves, he does not mention a word of it here; and I cannot conceive why Montaigne, who, at first, entered thoroughly into Pliny's sense, by saying that, according to this author, it was the custom for men to kill themselves, in order to be rid of any one of these three distempers, made him say afterwards that they had a right to kill themselves for this very end."

[4] Livy, xxxvii. 36.

enemy prevailing, they went to seek death, rushing furiously upon the enemy, with an intention to strike home, but not to defend a blow.[1] The Island of Gozo[2] being forced some years ago by the Turks, a Sicilian, who had two beautiful daughters marriageable, killed them both with his own hand, and their mother, running in to save them, to boot; which having done, sallying out of the house with a crossbow and a harquebuss, with those two shots he killed two of the Turks nearest to his door, and drawing his sword charged furiously in amongst the rest, where he was suddenly enclosed and cut to pieces; by that means delivering his family and himself from slavery and dishonour. The Jewish women, after having circumcised their children, threw themselves down a precipice to avoid the cruelty of Antigonus. I have been told of a gentleman in one of our prisons, whose friends being informed he would certainly be condemned, to avoid the ignominy of such a death, suborned a priest to tell him that the only means of deliverance was to recommend himself to such a saint under such and such vows, and fast eight days together without taking any manner of nourishment, what weakness or faintness soever he might find in himself during the time. He followed their advice, and by that means destroyed himself before he was aware, not dreaming of death or any danger in the experiment. Scribonia, advising her nephew Libo to kill himself, rather than to attend the stroke of justice, told him "that it was to do other people's business to preserve his life, to put it after into the hands of those who, within three or four days, would come and fetch him to execution; and that it was to serve his enemies to keep his blood to gratify their malice."[3] We read in the Bible that Nicanor,[4] the persecutor of the law of God, having sent his soldiers to seize upon the good old man Razias, surnamed, in honour of his virtue, the Father of the Jews; the good man seeing no other remedy, his gates burnt down,

[1] Livy, xlv. 26.
[2] A small island to the west of Malta, and not far from it.
[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 70.
[4] Maccabees, ii. 14. 37.

and the enemies ready to seize him, choosing rather to die generously than to fall into the hands of his wicked adversaries, and suffer himself to be cruelly butchered by them, contrary to the honour of his rank and quality, he stabbed himself with his own sword; but the blow, from haste, not having been given home, he ran and threw himself from the top of a wall headlong among them, who separating themselves and making room, he pitched directly upon his head. Notwithstanding which, feeling yet in himself some remains of life, he renewed his courage, and, starting up upon his feet, all bloody and wounded as he was, and making his way through the crowd, ran to a neighbouring precipice, but, not being able to reach the edge, through one of his wounds, he drew out his bowels, which, tearing and pulling to pieces with both his hands, he threw amongst his pursuers, all the while attesting and invoking the divine vengeance upon them.

Acts of violence committed on the chastity of women.

Of violence offered to the conscience, that against the chastity of woman is, in my opinion, the most to be avoided, forasmuch as there is a certain pleasure naturally mixed with it; and for that reason the dissent cannot be sufficiently perfect and entire, so that the violence seems to be mixed with a little consent of the forced party. The Ecclesiastical History marks with favour several examples of devout persons who have embraced death to secure them from the outrages prepared by tyrants against their religion and honour. Of Pelagia[1] and Sophronia,[2] both canonized, the first precipitated herself with her mother and sisters into the river, to avoid being forced by some soldiers, and the last also killed herself to escape being ravished by the Emperor Maxentius.

It may peradventure be an honour to us in future ages, that a learned author of this present time, and a Parisian, too, takes a great deal of pains to persuade the ladies of our age, rather to take any other course than to enter into the horrid meditation of such an act of despair. I am sorry he

[1] St. Ambrose, *de Virg.* iii.

[2] Rufinus, *Hist. Eccles.* viii. 17.

had never heard (that he might have inserted it amongst his other stories) the saying of a woman, which was told me at Toulouse, who had passed through the handling of some soldiers,—"God be praised," said she, "that once at least in my life I have had my fill without sin!" Truly, these cruelties are very unworthy the French sweetness and good-nature; and indeed, God be thanked, our air is very well purged of it since this good advice. 'Tis enough that they say *No*, in doing it, according to the rule of the good Marot.[1]

Death preferable to a miserable life.

History is everywhere full of such as, in a thousand ways, have for death exchanged a painful and irksome life. Lucius Aruntius killed himself, to fly, he said, both the future and the past.[2] Granius, Silvanus, and Statius Proximus, after having been pardoned by Nero, killed themselves;[3] either disdaining to live by the favour of so wicked a man, or that they might not be troubled at some other time to obtain a second pardon, considering his facility to suspect, and credit accusations against, worthy men. Spargapizez, the son of Queen Thomyris, being a prisoner of war to Cyrus, made use of the first favour Cyrus showed him, in commanding him to be unbound, to kill himself, having sought no other benefit of liberty but only to be avenged of himself for the disgrace of being taken.[4] Bogez, governor in Eiona for King Xerxes, being besieged by the Athenian army under the conduct of Cimon, refused the conditions offered, that he might return safe into Asia with all his wealth, unable to survive the loss of a place his master had given him to keep; wherefore, having defended the city to the last extremity, nothing being left to eat, he first threw the gold, and whatever else the enemy could make booty of, into the river Strymon, and, after causing a great pile to be set on fire, and the throats of all his wives, children, concubines, and servants, to be cut, he threw their bodies into the fire, and at last leaped into it himself.[5]

[1] In an epigram, entitled "Yea and Nay," which begins "Un doux Nenny, avec un doux Sourire," i. e. "One soft nay, nay, with a sweet smile."

[2] Tacit. *Annal* vi. 48.
[3] Id. *ib.* xv. 71.
[4] Herod. i. 213.
[5] Id. vii. 107.

Ninachetuen, an Indian lord, so soon as he heard the first whisper of the Portuguese viceroy's determination to dispossess him, without any apparent cause, of the command in Malaca, to transfer it to the King of Campar, took this resolution with himself. He caused a scaffold, longer than broad, to be erected, supported by columns, royally adorned with tapestry, and strewed with flowers and abundance of perfumes; all which being thus prepared, in a robe of cloth of gold, set full of jewels of great value, he came out into the street, and mounted the steps to the scaffold, at one corner of which he had a lighted pile of aromatic wood. Everybody ran to see to what end these unusual preparations were made; when Ninachetuen, with a manly but discontented countenance, began to remonstrate how much he had obliged the Portuguese nation, and with what fidelity he had carried himself in his charge; that having so often, with his sword in his hand, manifested, in the behalf of others, that honour was much more dear to him than life, he was not to abandon the concern of it for himself. That, fortune denying him all the means of opposing the affront designed to be put upon him, his courage at least enjoined him to free himself from the sense of it, and not to serve for a table-talk to the people, nor for a triumph to men less deserving than himself; which having said, he leaped into the fire.

Remarkable death of an Indian of quality.

Sextilia, the wife of Scaurus, and Paxea, the wife of Labeo, to encourage their husbands to evade the dangers that pressed upon them, wherein they had no other share than from mere conjugal affection, voluntarily gave up their own lives, to serve them, in this extreme necessity, for company and example.[1] What they did for their husbands, Cocceius Nerva did for his country, with less utility, though with equal affection. This great lawyer, flourishing in health, riches, reputation, and favour with the emperor, had no other cause

Two women who put themselves to death, to encourage their husbands to do the same.

[1] Tacit. *Annal.* vi. 29.

to kill himself but the sole compassion of the miserable estate of the Roman Republic.[1] Nothing can add to the grace of the death of the wife of Fulvius, a favourite of Augustus. Augustus, having discovered that he or his wife had blabbed an important secret he had intrusted him withal, one morning that he came to his court received him very coldly. He returned home full of despair, and sorrowfully told his wife that, being fallen into this misfortune, he was resolved to kill himself. To which she replied, "'Tis but reason you should, seeing that, having so often experienced the incontinency of my tongue, you could not take caution against it. But let me kill myself first;" and, without any more dispute, ran herself through the body with a sword.[2]

Vibius Virius, despairing of the safety of his city besieged by the Romans, and likewise of their mercy, in the last deliberation of his city's senate, after many remonstrances conducing to that end, concluded that the most noble means to escape fortune was by their own hands:—telling them that the enemy would have them in honour, and Hannibal would be sensible how many faithful friends he had abandoned; inviting those who approved of his advice to go take a good supper he had ready at home, where, after they had eaten well, they would drink together of what he had prepared; a beverage, said he, that will deliver our bodies from torments, our souls from injury, and our eyes and ears from the sense of so many hateful mischiefs as the conquered are to suffer from angry and implacable conquerors. "I have," said he, "taken order for fit persons to throw our bodies in a funeral pile before my door so soon as we are dead." Many approved this high resolution, few adopted it; seven-and-twenty senators followed him, who, after having tried to drown the thought of this fatal determination in wine, ended the feast with the mortal mess, and embracing one another, after they had jointly deplored the misfortune of their country, some retired home tc their own houses, others stayed to be burned with Vibius in

[1] Tacit. *Annal.* vi. 26. [2] Plutarch, *On Talking too much.*

his funeral pile; and were all of them so long a dying, the vapour of the wine having prepossessed the veins, and by that means deferring the effect of the poison, that some of them were within an hour of seeing the enemy within the walls of Capua, which was taken the next morning, and of undergoing the miseries they had at so dear a rate endeavoured to evade.[1] Taurea Jubellius, another citizen of the same country,[2] seeing the consul, Fulvius, returning from the shameful butchery he had made on this occasion of two hundred and twenty-five senators, called him back fiercely by his name, and having made him stop, "Give the word," said he, "that somebody may dispatch me after the massacre of so many others, that thou mayest boast to have killed a much more valiant man than thyself." Fulvius, disdaining him as a man out of his wits, and as also having received letters from Rome, contrary to the inhumanity of this execution, which tied his hands, Jubellius proceeded: "Since my country being taken, my friends dead, and having with my own hands slain my wife and children to rescue them from desolation and ruin, I am denied to die the death of my fellow-citizens, let us borrow from virtue vengeance on this hated life!" and drawing a sword he carried concealed about him, he ran it through his own bosom, falling down backward and expiring at the consul's feet.

Alexander, laying siege to a city of the Indies, those within, finding themselves very hardly pressed, put on a vigorous resolution to deprive him of the pleasure of his victory, and accordingly burned themselves in general, together with their city, in spite of all his efforts to save them; a new kind of war, where the enemies sought to rescue them, and they to kill themselves, doing, to make themselves sure of death, all that men do to secure their lives.[3]

Astapa, a city of Spain, finding itself too weak in walls and defence to withstand the Romans, the inhabitants made a

[1] Livy, xxvi. 13
[2] *Campania.* Livy, xxvi. 15.
[3] Diod. Sec. xvii. 18.

heap of all their riches and furniture in the public place, and, having ranged upon this heap all the women and children, and piled them round with wood and other combustible matter to take sudden fire, and left fifty of their young men for the execution of that whereon they had resolved; they made a desperate sally, where, for want of power to overcome, they caused themselves to be every man slain. The fifty, after having massacred every living soul throughout the whole city, and put fire to this pile, threw themselves lastly into it, finishing their generous liberty rather in an insensible, than after a sorrowful and disgraceful, manner, and showing the enemy that, if fortune had been so pleased, they had the courage as well to take the victory out of their hands as to frustrate and render it dreadful, and even mortal, to those who, allured by the glitter of the gold melting in this flame, having approached it, were in great numbers there suffocated and burned, being kept from retiring by the crowd that followed them.[1]

The Abydeans, being pressed by King Philip, put on the same resolution, but, being come upon too suddenly, they could not put it in effect; the king, however, who abhorred to see the precipitate rashness of this execution, (the treasure and movables which they had condemned to fire and water being first seized,) drawing off his soldiers, granted them three days' time to kill themselves in, that they might do it with more order and at greater ease; which space they filled with blood and slaughter, beyond the utmost excess of all hostile cruelty, so that not so much as any one soul was left alive that had the power to destroy itself.[2] There are infinite examples of like popular conclusions, which seem the more tremendous by how much the effect is more universal, and yet are really less than when singly executed. What arguments and persuasions cannot make upon individuals, they can do upon all, the ardour of society imposing upon particular judgments.

[1] Livy, xxviii. 22. [2] Livy, xxxi. 17.

The condemned who waited to be executed, in the reign of Tiberius, forfeited their goods, and were denied the rites of sepulture; but those who, by killing themselves, did anticipate it, were interred, and had liberty to dispose of their estates by will.[1]

But men sometimes covet death out of hope of a greater good. "I desire," says St. Paul,[2] "to be dead, that I may be with Christ;" and "who shall rid me of these bonds?" Cleombrotus Ambraciota,[3] having read Plato's Phædo, entered into so great a desire of the life to come that without any other occasion he threw himself into the sea. By which it appears how improperly we call this voluntary dissolution despair, to which the eagerness of hope does often incline us, and often a calm and temperate desire, proceeding from a mature and considerate judgment. Jaques du Chastel, Bishop of Soissons, in St. Louis's foreign expedition, seeing the king and the whole army upon the point of returning into France, leaving the affairs of religion imperfect, took a resolution rather to go into Paradise; wherefore, having taken solemn leave of his friends, he charged alone, in the sight of every one, into the enemy's army, where he was presently cut to pieces. In a certain kingdom of the New World, upon a day of solemn procession, when the Idol they adore is drawn about in public upon a car of wonderful size; besides that several are then seen cutting off pieces of their flesh to offer to him, there are a number of others who prostrate themselves to be crushed and broken to pieces with the weighty wheels, to obtain the veneration of sanctity after their death, which is accordingly paid them. The death of the forenamed bishop, with his sword in his hand, has more of gallantry in it, and less of feeling, the ardour of combat taking away part of the latter.

Death desired for the hopes of a greater good.

There are some governments who have taken upon them

[1] Tacitus, *Annals*, vi. 29.
[2] *Epist. to the Philipp.* c. 1, 23.
[3] Or of *Ambracia*, Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 34.

to regulate the justice and opportunity of voluntary deaths

Poison kept and prepared at the public expense for such as were inclined to make use of it

In former times there was kept, in our city of Marseilles, a poison prepared out of hemlock at the public charge, for those who had a mind to hasten their end, having first before the Six Hundred, which were their senate, given an account of the reasons and motives of their design, and it was not otherwise lawful than by leave from the magistrate, and upon just occasion, to do violence to themselves. The same law was also in use in other places.

Sextus Pompeius, in his expedition into Asia, touching at the Isle of Cea, in Negropont, it accidentally happened while he was there, as we have it from one that was with him,[1] that a woman of great quality having given an account to her citizens why she was resolved to put an end to her life, invited Pompeius to her death, to render it the more honourable; an invitation that he accepted, and having long tried in vain, by the power of his eloquence, which was very great, to divert her from that design, he acquiesced at last to grant her request. She had passed fourscore and ten years in a very happy state both of body and mind; but being then laid on her bed, better drest than ordinary, and leaning upon her elbow: "The Gods," said she, "O, Sextus Pompeius, and rather those I leave than those I go to seek, reward thee, for that thou hast not disdained to be both the counsellor of my life, and the witness of my death. For my part, having always experienced the smiles of fortune, for fear lest the desire of living too long may make me see a contrary fate, I am going by a happy end to dismiss the remains of my soul, leaving behind two daughters and a legion of nephews." Which, having said, and having exhorted her family to live in union and peace, she divided amongst them her goods, and recommending her domestic gods to her eldest daughter, she took with a firm hand the bowl that contained the poison, and, having made her vows and prayers to Mercury to con-

[1] Val. Max. ii. 6, 8.

duct her to some happy abode in the other world, drank off the mortal potion, which having done, she entertained the company with the progress of its operation, and how the cold by degrees seized the several parts of her body, one after another, till, having in the end told them it began to seize upon her heart and bowels, she called her daughters to do their last office and close her eyes.

Pliny[1] tells us of a certain hyperborean nation, where, by reason of the sweet temperature of the air, lives did rarely end but by the voluntary surrender of the inhabitants; but that, being weary of, and satiated with life, they had a custom, at a very old age, after having made good cheer, to precipitate themselves into the sea from the top of a certain rock, destined for that service. Pain, and the fear of a worse death, seem to me the most excusable incitements.

The voluntary death of the Hyperboreans.

CHAPTER IV.

BUSINESS TO-MORROW.

Of all our French writers, I give, with justice, I think, the palm to Jaques Amiot, as well for the propriety and purity of his language, in which he excels all others, as his application and patience in going through so long a work, and the depth of his learning and judgment in having been able to unravel and explain so difficult an author; (for let people say what they please, I understand nothing of Greek, but I meet with sense so well connected and maintained throughout his whole translation that certainly he either knew the true imagination of the

A eulogium on Amiot, the translator of Plutarch.

[1] *Nat. Hist.* vi 12.

author, or having, by long conversation with him, planted in his soul a thorough and lively idea of that of Plutarch, at least he has lent him nothing that either contradicts or dishonours him;) but what I am most pleased with him for is the discreet choice he has made of so noble and useful a book to make a present of to his country. We ignorant people had been undone had not this book raised us out of the mire; by its favour we dare both speak and write; by it the ladies are able to school their schoolmasters; 'tis our breviary. If this good man lived, I would desire him to do as much for Xenophon; 'tis a much easier task than the other, and consequently more proper for his age. And besides, I know not how, but methinks, though he briskly and clearly enough gets over steps another would have stumbled at, that nevertheless his style is more his own where he does not encounter those difficulties, and rolls on at its ease.

I was just now reading that passage where Plutarch says of himself, that Rusticus, being present at a declamation of his in Rome, he there received a packet from the emperor, and deferred to open it till all was over; for which, says he, all the company highly applauded the gravity of this person. 'Tis true, that his discourse being upon Curiosity, and that eager passion for news which makes us, with so much indiscretion and impatience, quit all things to entertain a new comer, and, without any manner of respect or civility, tear open on a sudden, in what company soever, the letters that are delivered to us, he had reason to applaud the gravity of Rusticus upon this occasion; and might moreover have added to it the commendation of his civility and courtesy, that would not interrupt the course of his declamation. But I doubt whether any one can commend his prudence; for, receiving unexpected letters, and especially from an emperor, it might well have fallen out that the deferring to read them might have been of great prejudice. The vice opposite to curiosity is negligence, to which I naturally incline, and which I have seen

Negligence the opposite vice to curiosity.

some men so extremely guilty of that one might have found the letters that had been sent to them three or four days before, still sealed up in their pockets.

I never opened any letters directed to another, not merely those entrusted with me, but even such as chance has placed in my hand; and am annoyed if my eyes unawares steal any contents of letters of importance which a great man is reading when I stand near him. Never was man less inquisitive, or less prying into other men's affairs than I am.

In our fathers' days Monsieur de Boutieres had liked to have lost Turin from neglecting, he having company at that time with him at supper, to read an information that was sent him of a conspiracy against the city where he commanded. And this very Plutarch tells me that Julius Cæsar had preserved himself, if, in going to the Senate the day he was assassinated by the conspirators, he had read a paper that was presented to him by the way; and he tells also the story of Archias, tyrant of Thebes, that the night before the execution of the design Pelopidas had laid to kill him, to restore his country to liberty, he had an account sent him in writing by another Archias, an Athenian, of the whole conspiracy, and that this packet having been delivered to him while he sat at supper, he deferred the opening of it, saying, which afterwards became a proverb in Greece, "Business to-morrow."[1]

A wise man may, I confess, out of respect to another, as not indecorously to disturb the company, as Rusticus did, or not to break off another affair of importance in hand, defer to read or hear any new thing that is brought him; but if for his own interest or particular pleasure, especially if he be a public minister, he will not interrupt his dinner, or break his sleep, he is inexcusable. And there was anciently at Rome the Consular Place, as they called it, which was the most honourable at the table, for being a place of most liberty, and of more convenient access

The consular place at table the most accessible.

[1] Plutarch, *On the Dæmon of Socrates.*

to those who came in to talk with the person seated there.[1] By which it appears that, though at meals, they did not totally abandon the concern of other affairs. But, when all is said, it is very hard in human actions to give so exact a rule, upon the best grounds of reason, that Fortune will not have a hand in them, and maintain her own right.

CHAPTER V.

OF CONSCIENCE.

THE Sieur de la Brousse, my brother, and I, travelling one day together during the time of our civil wars, met a gentleman of good mien. He was of the contrary party to ours, though I did not know so much, for he pretended otherwise; and the mischief is that, in this sort of war, the cards are so shuffled, an enemy not being distinguishable from a friend by any apparent mark, either of language or habit, nourished under the same laws, air, and manners, that it is very hard to avoid disorder and confusion. This made me afraid myself of meeting any of our troops in a place where I was not known, that I might not be in fear to tell my name, and peradventure of something worse; as it has befallen me before, where, by one of these mistakes, I lost both men and horses; and, amongst others, an Italian gentleman, my page, whom I had bred with the greatest care and affection, was miserably killed—in whom a promising youth of great expectation was blasted. But the gentleman that my brother and I met had so strange a fear upon him at the meeting of any horse, or passing by any of the towns belonging to the king, that I at last discovered them to be alarms of conscience, and the

[1] Plutarch, *Table-Talk*.

poor man seemed to be in such a condition as if through his vizard, and the crosses upon his cassock, one might have penetrated into his bosom, and read the most secret intentions of his heart. So wonderful is the power of conscience, that it makes us betray, accuse, and fight against ourselves; and, for want of other witnesses, to give evidence against ourselves,

Occultum quatiens animo tortore flagellum.[1]

"Whom conscience, ne'er asleep,
Wounds with incessant strokes, not loud, but deep."

This story is in every child's mouth: Bessus, the Pæonian, being reproached with wantonness, for pulling down a nest of young sparrows and killing them, replied he had reason so to do, seeing that those little birds never ceased falsely to accuse him of the murder of his father. This parricide had till then been concealed and unknown, but the revenging fury of conscience caused it to be discovered by himself, who was justly to suffer for it.[2] Hesiod corrects the saying of Plato, "That punishment closely follows sin;" it being, as he says, born at the same time with it.[3] Punishment connate with sin. Whoever expects punishment, already suffers it; whoever has deserved it, expects it.[4] Wickedness contrives torments against itself: *Malum consilium, consultori pessimum:*[5] "Ill designs fall out worse to the contriver;" as the wasp stings and offends another, but most of all itself; for it there loses its sting and its power for ever,

Vitasque in vulnere ponunt.[6]

"And in the wound which they inflict expire."

Cantharides have somewhere about them, by a contrariety of nature, a counterpoison against their poison.[7] In like manner, at the same time that we take delight in vice, there

[1] Juvenal, xiii. 195.
[2] Plutarch, *On Divine Justice.*
[3] Ibid.
[4] Seneca, *Epist.* 105.
[5] *Apud* Aul. Gell. iv. 5.
[6] Virg. *Georg.* iv. 238.
[7] Plutarch, *on Divine Justice.*

springs in the conscience a displeasure that afflicts us sleeping and waking with many tormenting imaginations:—

Quippe ubi se multi, per somnia sæpe loquentes,
Aut morbo delirantes, protraxe ferantur,
Et celata diu in medium peccata dedisse.[1]

"The guilty seldom their own counsel keep,
But oft will blab it ev'n in their sleep;
Or, in a fever raging, will reveal
Crimes which they long had labour'd to conceal."

Apollodorus dreamed that he saw himself flayed by the Scythians, and after boiled in a cauldron, and that his heart muttered these words: "I am the cause of all these mischiefs that have befallen thee."[2] Epicurus said that no hiding-place can conceal the wicked, since they can never assure themselves of being hid, for their consciences discover them to themselves.[3]

Prima est hæc ultio, quod se
Judice nemo nocens absolvitur.[4]

"Tis the first constant punishment of sin,
That no bad man absolves himself within."

As an ill conscience fills us with fear, so a good one gives us greater confidence and assurance; and I can truly say that I have gone through several hazards with a more steady pace, in consideration of the secret knowledge I had of my own will, and the innocence of my intentions:—

Conscia mens ut cuique sua est, ita concipit intra
Pectora pro facto spemque metumque suo.[5]

"Despotic conscience rules our hopes and fears."

Of this there are a thousand examples; but it will be enough to instance three of one and the same person. Scipio being one day accused before the people of Rome of a heavy crime, instead of excusing himself, or flattering the judges:

[1] Lucret. v. 1157.
[2] Plutarch, *of the Delay of the Divine Justice*, c. 9. This Apollodorus, who reigned like a true tyrant, was King of Cassandria, in Macedonia.
[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 97.
[4] Juvenal, xiii. 2.
[5] Ovid. *Fast.* i. 5, 25.

"It will become you well," said he, "to sit in judgment upon him by whom you have the power to judge all the world."[1] And another time all the answer he gave to several impeachments brought against him by a tribune of the people, instead of making his defence: "Come, citizens," said he, "let us go render thanks to the gods for the victory they gave me over the Carthaginians on such a day;" and marching himself before them towards the temple, he had presently all the assembly, and his very accuser himself, following at his heels.[2] And Petilius having been set on by Cato to demand of him an account of the money that had passed through his hands in the province of Antioch, Scipio, being come into the senate for that purpose, produced a book from under his robe, in which, he told them, was an exact account of his receipts and disbursements; but being required to deliver it to the secretary to be examined and enrolled, he refused, saying, "He would not do himself so great a disgrace;" and in the presence of the whole senate tore the book with his own hands to pieces.[3] I do not believe that a seared conscience could have counterfeited so great an assurance. "He had naturally too high a spirit, and was accustomed to too high a fortune," says Titus Livius, "to know how to be criminal, and to dispose himself to the meanness of defending his innocency."

The confident innocency of Scipio.

The putting men to the rack is a dangerous invention, and seems to be rather a trial of patience than of truth. Both he who has the fortitude to endure it conceals the truth, and he who has not. For why should pain sooner make me confess what really is, than force me to say what is not? And, on the contrary, if he who is not guilty of what he is accused of has the courage to undergo those torments, why should not he who is guilty have the same, so fair a reward as life being in his prospect? I think the ground of this invention proceeds from the con-

The inconveniences of the rack.

[1] Plutarch, *How far a Man may praise Himself.*

[2] Val. Max. iii. 7, 1.

[3] Livy, xxxviii. 54.

sideration of the force of conscience; for to the guilty it seems to assist the rack to make him confess his fault and to shake his resolution; and on the other side, that it fortifies the innocent against the torture. But when all is done, 'tis in plain truth a trial full of uncertainty and danger. What would not a man say, what would not a man do, to avoid such intolerable torments?

Etiam innocentes cogit mentiri dolor.[1]

"Pain the most innocent will make to lie."

whence it comes to pass that he whom the judge has racked that he may not die innocent is made to die both innocent and racked. A thousand and a thousand have charged their own heads by false confessions, amongst whom I place Philotas, considering the circumstances of the trial Alexander put him upon, and the progress of his torture.[2] "But so it is," say they, "that it is the least evil human weakness could invent;" very inhuman notwithstanding, and to very little purpose, in my opinion.

The use of the rack condemned by several nations, and why.

Many nations, less barbarous in this than the Greeks and Romans who call them so, repute it horrible and cruel to torment and pull a man to pieces for a fault of which they are yet in doubt. How can it help your ignorance? Are not you unjust, that, not to kill him without cause, do worse than kill him? And that this is so, do but observe by how many times he had rather die without reason than undergo this examination, more painful than execution itself; and which often, by its extremity, anticipates execution and dispatches him. I know not where I had this story,[3] but it exactly matches the conscience of our justice in this particular. A countrywoman came to a general[4] of very severe discipline, and accused one of his soldiers that he had taken from her children the little food she had left to nourish them withal, the army having

[1] Publius Syrus, *Maxims*.
[2] Quint. Curtius, vi. 7.
[3] It is in Froissart.
[4] Bajazet the First, whom Froissart calls Amorabaquin, — a name given to this prince because he was the son of Amorath.

consumed all the rest; but of this, proof there was none. The general cautioned the woman to take good heed to what she said, for that she would make herself guilty of a false accusation, and should suffer the punishment due to it if she told a lie; but she persisting, he presently caused the soldier's belly to be ripped up, to clear the truth of the fact, and the woman was found to be in the right. An instructive sentence.

CHAPTER VI.

USE MAKES PERFECT.

'Tis not to be expected that reasoning and instruction, though we never so voluntarily surrender our belief to them, should be powerful enough to lead us on so far as to action, if we do not over and above exercise and form the soul by experience to the course for which we design it; it will otherwise doubtless find itself at a loss when it comes to the pinch of the business. This is the reason why those amongst the philosophers who were ambitious to attain to a greater excellence were not contented to await the severities of fortune in their retirement and repose, lest she should surprise them raw and unexpert in the combat; but sallied out to meet her, and purposely threw themselves into the proof of difficulties. Some of whom abandoned riches to exercise themselves in a voluntary poverty; others have sought out labour, and an austerity of life, to inure themselves to hardships and inconveniences; others have deprived themselves of their dearest members, as of their eyes and instruments of generation, lest their too delightful and effeminate service should soften and relax the stability of their souls.

Reason and instruction, without practice, cannot make us virtuous.

But in dying, which is the greatest work we have to do, practice can give us no assistance. A man may by habit fortify himself against pain, shame, poverty, and such like misfortunes; but as to death, we can experience it but once, and are all apprentices when we come to it.

There have anciently been men such excellent managers of their time that they have tried even in death itself to relish and taste it, and who have bent their utmost faculties of mind to discover what this passage is. But they are none of them come back to give an account of it:—

Nemo expergitus extat,
Frigida quem semel est vitai pausa sequuta.[1]

"No person e'er again awak'd to breath
Who once was clasp'd in the cold arms of death."

A memorable instance of a Roman, who, when dying, observed the effect of death.

Canius Julius, a noble Roman of singular firmness and virtue, having been condemned to die by that rascal Caligula, besides many admirable testimonies that he gave of his resolution, as he was just going to receive the stroke of the executioner was asked by a philosopher, a friend of his,—"Well, Canius, whereabout is your soul now? What is she doing? —what are you thinking of?" "I was thinking," replied he, "to keep myself ready, and the faculties of my mind concentrated and fixed, to try if in this short and quick instant of death I could perceive the motion of the soul when she parts from the body, and whether she has any sense of the separation, that I may hereafter come again, if I can, to acquaint my friends with it."[2] This man philosophizes not unto death only, but in death itself. What a strange assurance was this, what loftiness of courage, to desire his death should be a lesson to him, and to have leisure to think of other things in so great an affair!

Jus hoc animi morientis habebat.[3]

"This mast'ry of his mind he, dying, had."

[1] Lucret. iii. 942.
[2] Seneca, *de Tranquillitate*.
[3] Lucret. viii. 686.

And yet I fancy there is some way of making it familiar to us, and in some sort of making trial what it is. We may gain experience of it, if not entire and perfect, yet such, at least, as shall not be perfectly useless to us; and that may render us more assured. If we cannot undertake it, we may approach it and view it; and if we do not advance so far as to the fort, we may at least discover and make ourselves perfect in the avenues. How a man may, in some measure, make death familiar to him.

It is not without reason that we are taught to consider sleep as a resemblance of death; with how great facility do we pass from waking to sleeping, and with how little concern do we lose the knowledge of light and of ourselves! Perhaps the faculty of sleeping would seem useless and contrary to nature, since it deprives us of all action and sense, were it not that by it nature instructs us that she has equally made us to die as to live, and from life presents us the eternal estate she reserves for us after it, to accustom us to it and to take from us the fear of it. But such as have by some violent accident fallen into a swoon, and in it have lost all sense, these, methinks, have been very near seeing the true and natural face of death; for as to the moment of the passage, it is not to be feared that it brings with it any pain or displeasure, forasmuch as we can have no feeling without leisure; our sufferings require time, which in death is so short and precipitous that it must necessarily be insensible. The approaches are what we have to fear, and these may fall within the limits of experience. Sleep the image of death.

Many things seem greater by imagination than they are in effect. I have passed a good part of my age in a perfect and entire health; I say not only entire, but moreover sprightly and wanton. This state, so full of verdure, jollity, and vigour, made the consideration of sickness so horrible to me, that, when I came to experience it, I found the attacks faint and easy, in comparison of what I had feared. Of this I have daily experience; if I am under the shelter of a warm room,

in a stormy and tempestuous night, I wonder how people can live abroad, and am afflicted for those who are out in the field; if I am there myself, I do not wish to be anywhere else. This one thing of being always shut up in a chamber I fancied insupportable; but I was presently inured to be so imprisoned a week, nay, a month together, weak and ill; and have found that in the time of my health I did much more pity the sick than I think myself to be pitied when I am so, and that the force of my imagination enhances near one half of the essence and reality of the thing. I hope that when I come to die I shall find the same, and that I shall not find it worth the pains I take, so much preparation and so much assistance as I call in to undergo the stroke. But, at all events, we cannot give ourselves too much advantage.

The story of an accident that happened to Montaigne, which cast him into a long swoon.

In the time of our third or second troubles (I do not well remember which), going one day abroad to take the air, about a league from my own house, which is seated in the very centre of the scene of all the bustle and mischief of the civil wars of France, thinking myself in all security and so near to my retreat that I stood in need of no better equipage, I had taken a horse that went very easy in his pace, but was not very strong. Being upon my return home, a sudden occasion falling out to make use of this horse in a kind of service that he was not very well used to, one of my people, a lusty, proper fellow, mounted upon a strong German horse, that had a very ill mouth, but was otherwise vigorous and unfoiled, to play a bravado and get ahead of his fellows, comes thundering full speed in the very track where I was, rushing like a Colossus upon the little man and the little horse, with such a career of strength and weight that he turned us both over and over, topsy-turvy, with our heels in the air; so that there lay the horse, overthrown and stunned by the fall, and I ten or twelve paces from him, stretched out at length, with my face all battered and bruised, my sword, which I had in my hand, above ten paces beyond

me, and my belt broken all to pieces, without any more motion or sense than a stock. 'Twas the only swoon I was ever in till that hour in my life. Those who were with me, after having used all the means they could to bring me to myself, concluding me dead, took me up in their arms and carried me with very much difficulty home to my house, which was about half a French league thence. On the way, and after having for more than two long hours been given over for a dead man, I began to move and fetch my breath, for so great abundance of blood was fallen into my stomach that nature had need to rouse her forces to discharge it. They then raised me upon my feet, where I threw off a great quantity of pure blood, which I did also several other times on the way. This gave me so much ease that I began to recover a little life, but slowly, and by so small advances that my first sensations were much more like the approaches of death than life :—

> Perchè, dubbiosa ancor del suo ritorno,
> Non s'assicura attonita la mente.[1]
>
> "Because the soul her mansion half had quit,
> And was not sure of her return to it."

The remembrance of this accident, which is very well imprinted in my memory, so naturally representing to me the image and idea of death, has in some sort reconciled me to it. When I first began to open my eyes after my trance, it was with so perplexed, so weak and dead a sight, that I could yet distinguish nothing, and could only discern the light :—

> Come quel ch' or apre, or chiude
> Gli occhi, mezzo tra 'l sonno è l' esser desto.[2]
>
> "As people in the morning when they rise,
> 'Twixt sleep and wake, open and shut their eyes."

As to the functions of the soul, they advanced with the same pace and measure with those of the body. I saw myself all bloody, for my doublet was stained all over with the blood I had vomited. The first thought that came into my

[1] Tasso, *La Gerusalemme*, ii. 74. [2] Id. *ib.* viii. 26.

mind was that I had a cross-bow shot in my head; indeed at the same time there were several of these discharged round about us. Methought my life but just hung upon my lips, and I shut my eyes to help, methought, to thrust it out, and took a pleasure in languishing and letting myself go. It was an imagination that only superficially floated upon my soul, as tender and weak as all the rest; but really not only exempt from pain, but mixed with that sweetness and pleasure that people are sensible of when they are falling into a slumber.

Whether swoonings in the agonies of death are very painful.

I believe it is the very same condition those people are in whom we see swoon with weakness, in the agony of death, and I am of opinion that we pity them without cause, supposing them agitated with grievous dolours, or that their souls suffer under painful thoughts. It has ever been my belief, contrary to the opinion of many, and even of Stephen Boëtius, that those whom we see so subdued and stupefied at the approach of their end, or depressed with the length of the disease, or by accident of an apoplexy or falling sickness,—

Vi morbi sæpe coactus,
Ante oculos aliquis nostros, ut fulminis ictu,
Concidit, et spumas agit, ingemit, et fremit artus,
Desipit, extentat nervos, torquetur, anhelat,
Inconstanter et in jactando membra fatigat; [1]

"As if by thunder struck, oft have we known
The dire disease's victims fall and groan,
Foam, tremble, writhe, breathe short, until at length
In various strugglings they exhaust their strength;"

or hurt in the head, whom we hear to mutter, and by fits to give grievous groans; though we gather thence some signs by which it seems as if they had some remains of sense and knowledge, I have always believed, I say, both the body and the soul benumbed and asleep;

Vivit, et est vitæ nescius ipse suæ; [2]

"He lives, but knows it not;"

[1] Lucret, iii. 486. [2] Ovid, *Trist.* iii. 8, 12

and I cannot believe that in so great a stupefaction of the members, and so great a defection of the senses, the soul can maintain any force within to take cognizance of herself, or look into her own condition, and that therefore they had no reason or reflections to torment them, or make them consider and be sensible of the misery of their condition, and that consequently they were not much to be pitied.

I can, for my part, think of no state so insupportable and dreadful as to have the soul vividly alive and afflicted, without means to declare itself; as I should say of such who are sent to execution, with their tongues first cut out (were it not that, in this kind of dying, the most silent seems to me the most graceful, if accompanied with a grave and firm countenance), or of those miserable prisoners who fall into the hands of the base, bloody soldiers of this age, by whom they are tormented with all sorts of inhuman usage to compel them to some excessive and impossible ransom, kept in the mean time in such condition and place, where they have no means of expressing or signifying their mind and misery to such as they may expect should relieve them. The poets have feigned some gods who favour the deliverance of such as suffer under a languishing death:—

Hunc ego Diti
Sacrum jussa fero, teque isto corpore solvo.[1]

"I, by command, offer to Pluto this,
And from that body do thy soul dismiss."

And the unconnected words and the short and irregular answers one gets from them sometimes, by bawling and keeping a clutter about them; or the motions which seem to yield some consent to what we would have them do, are no testimony nevertheless that they live an entire life at least. It is thus that in the yawning of sleep, before it has fully possessed us, we perceive, as in a dream, what is done about us, and follow the last things that are said, with a perplexed and uncertain hearing, which seems but to touch upon

[1] *Æneid*, iv. 702.

the borders of the soul, and make answers to the last words that were spoken to us, which have more in them of chance than sense.

Now, seeing I have, in effect, tried it, I made no doubt but I have hitherto made a right judgment of it. For first, being quite in a swoon, I laboured to tear open my doublet with my hands, for I was without a weapon, and yet I felt nothing in my imagination that hurt me; for we have many motions in us that do not proceed from our direction:—

> Semianimesque micant digiti, ferrumque retractant.[1]
>
> "And half-dead fingers grope about and feel,
> To grasp again the late abandoned steel."

So falling people extend their arms before them by a natural impulse which prompts them to offices and motions, without any commission from us.

> Falciferos memorant currus abscindere membra, . . .
> Ut tremere in terrâ videatur ab artubus, id quod
> Decidit abscissum; cum mens tamen atque hominis vis,
> Mobilitate mali, non quit sentire dolorem.[2]
>
> "So chariots armed with keen scythes around,
> When fiercely driven, deal the desp'rate wound;
> And yet the wounded man, so quick's the blow,
> Is scarce disturb'd, scarce seems to feel or know
> His wound."

My stomach was oppressed with the coagulated blood, and my hands moved to that part by their own voluntary motion, as they frequently do to the part that itches, without being directed by our will. There are several animals, and even men, in whom one may perceive the muscles to stir and tremble after they are dead. Every one by experience knows that there are some members which grow stiff, and flag, often without his leave. Now these passions which only touch the outward bark of us, as a man may say, cannot be said to be ours; to make them so there must be a concurrence of the whole man; and the pains which are felt

[1] *Æneid*, x. 396. [2] Lucret. iii. 642.

by the hand or the foot, while we are sleeping, are none of ours.

As I drew near my own house, where the alarm of my fall was already got before me, and my family ran to me with the clamour usual in such cases, I did not only make some little answer to the questions that were asked me, but they moreover tell me that I had so much sense about me as to order them to give a horse to my wife, who I saw was toiling and labouring along the road, which was a steep and uneasy one. This consideration should seem to proceed from a soul that retained its function, but it was not so with me. I knew not what I said or did; they were nothing but idle thoughts in the clouds that were stirred up by the senses of the eyes and ears, and proceeded not from me. I knew not any the more whence I came, or whither I was going, neither was I capable to weigh and consider what was said to me. These were light effects that the senses produced of themselves, as of custom; what the soul contributed was in a dream, and lightly touched, as it were, merely licked and bedewed by the soft impression of the senses. Meantime my condition was, in truth, very easy and quiet; I had no affliction upon me, either for others or myself. It was an extreme drooping and weakness, without any manner of pain. I saw my own house, but knew it not. When they had put me to bed, I found an inexpressible sweetness in that repose; for I had been wretchedly tugged and jolted about by those poor people who had taken the pains to carry me upon their arms a very great, and a very ill way, and had, in doing so, all quite tired out themselves twice or thrice, one after another. They offered me all sorts of remedies, but I would take none, certainly believing that I was mortally wounded in the head. And in earnest, it had been a very happy death; for the weakness of my understanding deprived me of the faculty of discerning, and that of my body from the sense of feeling. I was suffering myself to glide away so sweetly, and after so soft and easy a manner, that I scarce

find any other action less troublesome than that was. When I came again to myself, and to reassure my faculties,

Ut tandem sensus convaluere mei,[1]

"As my lost senses did again return,"

which was two or three hours after, I felt myself on a sudden involved in a terrible pain, having my limbs battered and knocked to pieces with my fall, and was so exceedingly ill for two or three nights after that, I thought once more I was dying, but a more painful death, and to this hour am sensible of the bruises of that shock. I will not here omit that the last thing I could make them beat into my head was the memory of the accident; and I made it be over and over again repeated to me whither I was going, whence I was coming, and at what time of the day this mischance befell me, before I could comprehend it. As to the manner of my fall, that was concealed from me in favour to him who had been the occasion, and some other account was invented. But a long time after, and the very next day, when my memory began to return and represent to me the state wherein I was at the instant that I perceived this horse coming full drive upon me (for I had seen him at my heels, and gave myself for gone; but this thought had been so sudden that fear had no leisure to introduce itself), it seemed to me like a flash of lightning that had pierced through my soul, and that was coming from the other world.

Man is a good lesson to himself.

This long story of so light a matter would appear vain enough, were it not for the knowledge I have gained by it for my own use; for I really find that, to get acquainted with death, you have but nearly to approach it. "Every one," as Pliny says,[2] "is a good doctor to himself, provided he be capable of looking closely into himself." This is not my doctrine, 'tis my study; it is not the lesson of another, but my own, and yet, if I communicate it, it ought not to be ill taken. That which is of use to me

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* i. 3. 14.

[2] *Nat. Hist.* xxii. 24.

may also, perhaps, be useful to another. As to the rest, I spoil nothing, I make use of nothing but my own; and, if I play the fool, 'tis at my own expense, and nobody else is concerned in it; for 'tis a folly that will die with me, and that no one is to inherit. We hear of but two or three of the ancients who have beaten this road, and yet we cannot say if it be after this manner, knowing no more of them but their names. No one since has followed the track; 'tis a ticklish subject, and more nice than it seems, to follow a pace so extravagant and uncertain as that of the soul, to penetrate the dark profundities of her intricate internal windings, to choose and lay hold of so many little nimble motions; it is a new and extraordinary undertaking, which withdraws us from the common and most recommended employments of the world. 'Tis now many years since that my thoughts have had no other aim and object than myself, that I have only pried into and studied myself; and if I do now and then study any other thing, 'tis all of a sudden, in order to apply it to myself, or rather, in myself. And I do not think it a fault if, as others do by much less profitable sciences, I communicate what I have learnt in this matter; though I am not very well pleased with what progress I have made in it. There is no description so difficult, nor doubtless of so great utility, as that of one's self. And withal a man must curl his hair, order his apparel, and adjust himself to appear in public. Now, I am perpetually setting off myself, for I am eternally upon my own description. Custom has made all speaking of a man's self vicious, and positively forbids it, in hatred to the vanity that seems inseparably joined with the testimony men give of themselves. Because the child wants to blow his nose they cut it off:—

Whether it is vanity for a man to speak sincerely of himself.

In vitium ducit culpæ fuga.

"But oft our greatest errors take their rise
From our best views."

[1] Horace, *Art. Poet.* 31.

I find more evil than good in this remedy. But though it should be true that to entertain people with discourses of ourselves must of necessity be a piece of presumption, yet I ought not, according to my general plan, to forbear an action that publishes this infirmity, since it is in me; nor conceal a fault which I not only practise but profess. Nevertheless, to speak my mind freely of the matter, I think the custom of condemning wine, because some people will be drunk, is to be condemned. A man cannot abuse any thing but what is good in itself; and I believe that this rule has only regard to the popular vice; it is a bridle for calves, by which neither saints, whom we hear speak so highly of themselves, nor the philosophers, nor the divines, will be curbed; neither will I, who am as little the one as the other. If these folks do not expressly name themselves, yet they take good care, whenever an occasion offers, to exhibit themselves so manifestly before you that there is no mistaking them. Of what does Socrates treat more largely than of himself? To what does he more direct and address the discourses of his disciples than to speak of themselves; not of the lesson in their book, but of the essence and motion of their souls? We confess ourselves religiously to God and our confessor, as our neighbours[1] do to all the people. But it may be said,—"there we speak nothing but accusation against ourselves." Why then we say all, for our very virtue itself is faulty and repentable. My trade and my art is to live. He that forbids me to speak according to my own sense, experience, and practice, may as well enjoin an architect not to speak of building according to his own knowledge, but according to that of his neighbour; according to the knowledge of another, and not according to his own. If it be vainglory for a man to publish his own virtues, why does not Cicero prefer the eloquence of Hortensius, and Hortensius that of Cicero? Perhaps they mean that I should give testimony of myself by works and effects, not barely by words; I chiefly paint my thoughts, an inform

[1] The Protestants.

subject, and incapable of operative production. 'Tis all that I can do to couch it in this airy body of the voice. The wisest and devoutest men have lived in the greatest care to avoid all discovery of works; effects would speak more of fortune than of me. They manifest their own office, and not mine; but uncertainly, and by conjecture. They are but patterns of some one particular virtue. I expose myself entire; 'tis an anatomy where, at one view, the veins, muscles, and tendons are apparent, each of them in its proper place. The effect of coughing produced one part, the effect of paleness or heart-beating another, but this doubtfully. I do not write my acts, but myself and my essence.

It is a commendable thing for a man to set a just value upon himself.

I am of opinion that a man must be very prudent in valuing himself, and equally conscientious to give a true report, be it better or worse, indifferently. If I thought myself perfectly good and wise, I would sound it forth to good purpose. To speak less of a man's self than what one really is, is folly, not modesty; and to take that for current pay which is under a man's value is pusillanimity and cowardice, according to Aristotle;[1] no virtue assists itself with falsehood; truth is never the matter for error; to speak more of one's self than is really true is not always presumption, 'tis moreover very often folly; to be immeasurably pleased with what one is, and to fall into an indiscreet self-love, is the substance of this vice. The best remedy for it is to do quite contrary to what these people direct, who, in forbidding us to speak of ourselves, do consequently at the same time interdict thinking of ourselves. Pride dwells in the thought; the tongue can have but very little share in it.

They fancy that to think of one's self is to be delighted with one's self; that to frequent and to converse with one's self is to be over-indulgent. But this excess arises only in those who take but a superficial view of themselves, and dedicate their main inspection to their affairs; that call medita-

[1] *Ethics*, iv. 7.

tion raving and idleness, and furnishing and fitting ourselves up building castles in the air; looking upon themselves as a third person only, and a stranger. If any one is charmed with his own knowledge, whilst he looks only on those below him, let him but turn his eye upward toward past ages and his pride will be abated, when he shall there find so many thousand wits that trample him under foot. If he enter into a flattering vanity of his personal valour, let him but recollect the lives of Scipio, Epaminondas, so many armies and nations that leave him so far behind, and he will be cured of his self-opinion. No particular quality can make any man proud, that will at the same time put the so many weak and imperfect ones he has in him in the other scale, and the nothingness of human condition to balance the weight. Because Socrates had alone digested to purpose the precept of his God, "To know himself;" and by that study was arrived to the perfection of setting himself at nought, he only was reputed worthy the title of a sage. Whoever shall so know himself, let him boldly speak out and make himself known.

Why Socrates was reckoned the only wise man.

CHAPTER VII.

OF RECOMPENSES OF HONOUR.

THOSE who wrote the life of Augustus Cæsar[1] observe this in his military discipline—that he was wonderfully liberal of gifts to men of merit; but that as to the pure recompenses of honour he was altogether as sparing; he himself had been gratified by his uncle with all the military recompenses before he had

Honorary rewards ought to be dispensed with very great discretion.

[1] Suetonius, *in Vitâ.*

ever been in the field. It was a pretty invention, and received into most governments of the world, to institute certain vain and in themselves valueless distinctions, to honour and recompense valour or virtue; such as crowns of laurel, oak, and myrtle; the particular fashion of some garment; the privilege to ride in a coach in the city, or to have a torch by night; some peculiar place assigned in public assemblies; the prerogative of certain additional names and titles; certain distinctions in their bearing of coats of arms, and the like; the use of which, according to the several humours of nations, has been variously received, and does yet continue.

Orders of knighthood instituted to reward military virtue.

We in France, as also several of our neighbours, have the orders of knighthood, that were instituted only for this end. And it is, indeed, a very good and profitable custom to find out an acknowledgment for the worth of excellent and extraordinary men; and to satisfy their ambition with rewards that are not at all costly either to prince or people. And what has been always found both by ancient experience, and which we ourselves may also have observed in our own times, that men of quality have ever been more jealous of such recompenses than of those wherein there was gain and profit, is not without very good ground and reason. If with reward, which ought to be simply a recompense of honour, they should mix other emoluments, and add riches, this mixture, instead of procuring an increase of esteem, would vilify and debase it. The order of St. Michael,[1] which has been so long in repute amongst us, had no greater commodity than that it had no communication with any other; which produced this effect, that formerly there was no office or title whatever to which the gentry pretended with so great a desire and affection as they did to this order; nor quality that carried with it more respect and grandeur; virtue more willingly embracing and with greater ambition aspiring to a recompense truly her own, and rather honourable than beneficial.

The Order of St. Michael.

[1] Instituted by an ordonnance of Louis XI. at Amboise, 1st August, 1469.

For, in truth, the other rewards have not so great a dignity in them, by reason they are laid out upon all sorts of occasions. With money a man pays the wages of a servant, the diligence of a courier, dancing, vaulting, speaking, and the vilest offices we receive; nay, we reward vice with it, too, as flattery, treachery, and pimping; and therefore 'tis no wonder if virtue less desires, and less willingly receives, this common sort of payment, than that which is proper and peculiar to her, as being truly generous and noble. Augustus was right in being a better husband and more sparing of this than the other, by how much honour is a privilege that extracts its principal essence from its rarity, and virtue the same.

Cui malus est nemo, quis bonus esse potest?[1]

"To whom none seemeth bad, who good can seem?"

We do not intend it for a commendation when we say that such a one is careful in the bringing up of his children, by reason it is a common act, how just and well done soever, no more than we commend a great tree where the whole forest is the same. I do not think that any citizen of Sparta valued himself upon his valour, it being the universal virtue of the whole nation, and as little prided himself upon his fidelity and contempt of riches. There is no recompense to virtue, how great soever, that is once become a general custom; and I know not withal whether we can ever call it great, being common.

Valour of the citizens of Sparta.

Seeing then that these rewards of honour have no other value and estimation but only this, that few people enjoy them, 'tis but to be liberal of them to bring them down to nothing. And though there should be more men found than in former times worthy of our order,[2] the value of it, nevertheless, ought not to be abated, nor the honour made cheap; and it may easily happen that more may merit it now than formerly; for there is no virtue that so easily diffuses itself as that of military valour. There is another true, per-

[1] Martial, xii. 82.

[2] That of St. Michael.

fect, and philosophical, of which I do not speak (and only make use of the word in the common acceptation), much greater than this, and more full, which is a strength and assurance of soul, despising equally all sorts of adverse accidents, equable, uniform, and constant, of which ours is but a little ray. Use, bringing up, example and custom, can do all in all in the establishment of that which I am speaking of, and with great facility render it common, as by the experience of our civil war is manifest enough; and whoever could at this instant unite us all, Catholics and Huguenots, into one body, and set us upon some common enterprise, we should make our ancient military reputation flourish again. It is most certain that in times past the recompense of this order had not only a regard to valour, but had a farther prospect. It never was the reward of a valiant soldier, but of a great captain; the science of obeying was not reputed worthy of so honourable a guerdon. There was therein a more universal military expertness required, which comprehended the most and the greatest qualities of a military man: *Neque enim eædem militares et imperatoriæ artes sunt.* "For the qualities of a soldier and of a general are not the same;" and, besides, a man was to be of a birth and rank suitable to such a dignity. But I say, though more men should be worthy now than formerly, yet ought it not to be more liberally distributed; and it were better to fall short and not give it to all to whom it may be due, than for ever to lose, as we have lately done, the fruit of so useful an invention. No man of spirit will vouchsafe to advantage himself with what is in common with many; and such of the present time as have least merited this recompense make the greater show of disclaiming it, intending thereby to be ranked with those to whom so much wrong has been done, by the unworthy conferring and debasing the distinction which was their particular right.

Now to expect, in obliterating and abolishing this, suddenly to create and bring into credit a like institution, is not

It is difficult to bring a new order of knighthood into credit.

a proper attempt for so licentious and sick a time as this in which we now are; and it will fall out that the last[1] will, from its birth, incur the same inconveniences that have ruined the other. The rules for the dispensing of this new order had need to be extremely clipped, and bound under great restrictions, to give it authority; and this tumultuous season is incapable of such a curb. Besides that, before this can be brought into reputation, 'tis necessary that the memory of the first, and the contempt into which it is fallen, should be totally buried in oblivion.

This place might naturally enough admit of some discourse upon the consideration of valour, and the difference of this virtue from others; but Plutarch having so often handled this subject, I should give myself an unnecessary trouble to repeat what he has said. But this, nevertheless, is worth considering, that our nation places valour (*vaillance*) in the highest degree of virtue, as the very word itself shows, being derived from value (*valeur*); and that, according to our custom, when we mean a worthy man, or a man of value (*homme vaillant*), it is only in our court style to say a valiant man, after the Roman way; for the general appellation of virtue with them takes etymology from force.[2] The proper, sole, and essential occupation of the French nobility and gentry is the practice of arms. It is likely that the first virtue which discovered itself amongst men, and that has given some advantage over others, was this, by which the strongest and most valiant have mastered the weaker, and acquired a particular rank and reputation, whence this honour and name remained to them. Or else that these nations, being very warlike, have given the preëminence to that of the virtues which was most familiar to them, and which they thought of the most worthy

Valour the chief virtue among the French.

[1] The order of *Saint Esprit* (the Holy Ghost), instituted by Henry III. in 1578.

[2] *Virtus, vis.* "Le mot de *vertu* vient de force; la force est la base de toute vertu; la vertu n'appartient qu'à un être foible par sa nature, et fort par sa volonte."—Rousseau, *Emile*, v.

character. Just as our passion, and the feverish solicitude we have of the chastity of women makes the saying a good woman, a woman of worth, a woman of honour and virtue, to signify no more than a chaste woman; as if to oblige her to that one duty, we were indifferent to all the rest; and gave them the reins to all other faults whatever, to compound for that one of incontinence.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE AFFECTION OF FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN.

To Madame D'Estissac.[1]

MADAM, if the strangeness and novelty of my subject, which generally give value to things, do not save me, I shall never come off with honour from this foolish attempt; but 'tis so fantastic, and carries a face so unlike the common custom, that the oddness of it may perhaps make it pass. 'Tis a melancholic humour, and consequently a humour very much opposed to my natural complexion, engendered by the pensiveness of the solitude into which for some years past I have retired myself, that first put into my head this idle fancy of writing; wherein, finding myself totally unprovided and empty of other matters, I presented myself to myself for argument and subject. 'Tis the only book in the world of its kind, and of a wild and extravagant design. Indeed, there is nothing worth remark but the extravagancy in this affair; for in a subject so vain and frivolous the best workman in the world could not have given it a form fit to recommend it to any manner of esteem. Now, madam, being to draw my

[1] The son of this lady accompanied Montaigne in his journey to Rome.

own picture to the life, I should have omitted an important feature, had I not represented in it the honour I have ever paid to your merits; and I have chosen to say this expressly at the head of this chapter, by reason that, among your other excellent qualities, the love you have shown to your children holds one of the chief places. Whoever shall know at what age Monsieur d' Estissac, your husband, left you a widow, the great and honourable matches have since been offered to you, as many and as great as to any lady of your condition in France; the firmness and steadiness wherewith you have sustained for so many years, through so many sharp difficulties, the charge and conduct of their affairs, which have kept you in agitation in every corner of the kingdom, and which yet hold you, as it were, besieged, and the happy direction you have given all these, either by your prudence or good fortune, will easily conclude with me that we have not a more striking example than yours of maternal affection in our times.

I praise God, madam, that it has been so well employed; for the great hopes that Monsieur d' Estissac, your son, gives of himself, are sufficient assurances that, when he comes to age, you will reap from him all the obedience and gratitude of a very good man. But forasmuch as by reason of his tender years he has not been capable of taking notice of those numberless offices of kindness which he has received from you, I will take care, if these papers ever fall into his hands, when I shall neither have mouth nor speech left to deliver it to him, that he shall receive from me this testimony, in all truth, which shall be more effectually manifested to him by their own effects, and by which he will see and feel that there is not a gentleman in France who stands more indebted to a mother's care than he does; and that he cannot for the future give a better nor more certain proof of his own worth and virtue, than by acknowledging you for that excellent mother you are.

If there be any law truly natural, that is to say, any in-

stinct that is seen universally, and perpetually imprinted in both beasts and men (which is not without controversy), I can say that, in my opinion, next to the care every animal has of his own preservation, and to avoid that which may hurt him, the affection that the begetter bears to his offspring holds the second place in rank. And seeing that nature seems to have recommended it to us, having regard to the extension and progression of the successive pieces of this machine of hers; 'tis no wonder that, on the contrary, that of children towards their parents is not so great. To which we may add this other Aristotelian consideration, that he who confers a benefit on any one loves him better than he is beloved by him again; and that he to whom it is due loves better than him from whom it is due;[1] and that every artificer is fonder of his work than, if that work had sense, it would be of the artificer; by reason that it is dear to us to be, and to be consists in moving and action; whereby every one has, in some sort, a being in his work. Whoever confers a benefit, exercises a fine and honest action; he who receives it, exercises the *utile* only. Now the *utile* is much less amiable than the *honestum;* the *honestum* is stable and permanent, supplying him who has done it with a continual gratification. The *utile* loses itself, easily slides away, and the memory of it is neither so fresh nor so pleasing. Those things are dearest to us that have cost us most; and giving is more chargeable than receiving.

The affection of parents toward their children greater than that of children towards them, and why.

Since it has pleased God to endue us with some capacity of weighing and considering things, to the end we may not, like brutes, be servilely subjected and enslaved by the laws common to both, but that we should by judgment, and a voluntary liberty, apply ourselves to them; we ought, indeed, sometimes to yield to the simple authority of nature, but not suffer ourselves to be tyrannically hurried away, and transported by her; reason

To what end men are created capable of reasoning.

[1] Aristotle, *Ethics*, ix. 7.

alone should have the conduct of our inclinations. I, for my part, have a strange distaste to those inclinations that are started in us, without the mediation and direction of the judgment; as, upon the subject I am speaking of, I cannot entertain that passion of dandling and caressing an infant scarcely born, having, as yet, neither motion of soul, nor shape of body distinguishable, by which they can render themselves lovable; and have not willingly suffered them to be nursed near me. A true and well-regulated affection ought to spring up, and increase with the knowledge they give us of themselves, and then, if they are worthy of it, natural propension going hand in hand with reason, to cherish them with a truly paternal love; and to judge and discern also if they be otherwise, still submitting ourselves to reason, notwithstanding the force of nature. It is often quite the reverse; and most commonly we find ourselves more taken with the first trotting about, and little ways and plays of our children, than we are afterwards with their formed actions; as if we had loved them for our sport, like monkeys, and not as men. And some there are who are very liberal in buying them playthings when they are children, who are very close-handed for the least necessary expense when they grow up. Nay, to such degree that it looks as if the jealousy of seeing them appear in, and enjoy the world, when we are about to leave it, renders us more niggardly and stingy towards them; it vexes us that they tread upon our heels, as if to solicit us to go out; but if this be to be feared, since the order of things will have it so, that they cannot, to speak the truth, be or live but at the expense of our being and life, we should never meddle with getting children.

What ought to be the love of parents to their children.

For my part, I think it cruelty and injustice not to receive them into the share and society of our goods, and not to make them partakers in the intelligence of our domestic affairs when they are capable, and not to lessen and contract our own expenses, to make the more room for theirs, seeing we

begat them to that effect. 'Tis unjust that an old fellow, deaf, lame, and half dead, should alone, in a corner of the chimney, enjoy the goods that were sufficient for the maintenance and advancement of many children, and suffer them in the mean time to lose their best years for want of means to put themselves forward in the public service, and the knowledge of men. A man by this means drives them to desperate courses, and to seek out by any means, how unjust or dishonourable soever, to provide for their own support; as I have, in my time, seen several young men of good birth so addicted to stealing that no correction could cure them of it. I know one of a very good family, to whom, at the request of a brother of his, a very honest and brave gentleman, I once spoke on this account; who made answer, and confessed to me roundly that he had been put upon this dirty practice by the severity and avarice of his father; but that he was now so accustomed to it he could not leave it off. At this very time he had been entrapped stealing a lady's rings, being come into her chamber as she was dressing, with several others. He put me in mind of a story I had heard of another gentleman so perfect and accomplished in this genteel trade in his youth that, after he came to his estate, and resolved to give it over, could not hold his hands, nevertheless, if he passed by a shop where he saw any thing he liked, from catching it up, though it put him to the shame of sending afterwards to pay for it. And I have myself seen several so habituated to this laudable quality that even amongst their comrades they could not forbear filching, though with intent to restore what they had taken. I am a Gascon, and yet there is no vice I so little understand as that; I hate it even something more by disposition than I condemn it by my reason; I do not so much as desire any thing of another man's. This province of ours is, in truth, a little more suspected than the other parts of the kingdom; and yet we have often seen, in our times, men of good families of other prov-

Young men given to filching.

Gascons generally addicted to stealing.

inces, in the hands of justice, convicted of several abominable thefts. I fear this offence is, in some sort, to be attributed to the forementioned vice of the fathers.

And if a man should tell me, as a lord of very good understanding once did, "That he hoarded up wealth, not to extract any other fruit and use from his parsimony, but to make himself honoured and sought after by his own relations; and that, age having deprived him of all other powers, it was the only remaining remedy to maintain his authority in his family, and to keep him from being neglected and despised by all the world," (and, in truth, not only old age, but all other imbecility, according to Aristotle,[1] is the promoter of avarice,) this is something, but it is physic for a disease that a man should prevent altogether. A father is very miserable that has no other hold of his children's affections than the need they have of his assistance, if that can be called affection; he must render himself worthy to be respected by his virtue and wisdom, and beloved by his bounty and the sweetness of his manners. Even the very ashes of a rich matter have their value, and we generally, by custom, have the bones and relics of worthy men in regard and reverence. No old age can be so ruinous and offensive in a man who has passed his life in honour, but it must be venerable, especially to his children; the soul of whom he must have trained up to their duty by reason, not by necessity and the need they have of him, nor by roughness and force:—

The means by which a father should procure the respect of his children

> Et errat longe, meâ quidem sententiâ,
> Qui imperium credat esse gravius aut stabilius
> Vi quod fit, quam illud quod amicitia adjungitur.[2]
>
> "And he extremely differs from my sense,
> Who thinks the pow'r obtain'd by violence
> Can ever prove more solid and secure,
> Than that which friendship's softer means procure."

I condemn all violence in the education of a gentle soul

[1] *Ethics*, iv. 8.

[2] Terence, *Adelph.* i. 1, 40.

that is designed for honour and liberty. There is, I know not what of servile in rigour and restraint; and I am of opinion that what is not to be done by reason, prudence, and address, is never to be effected by force. I myself was brought up after that manner, and they tell me that in all my first age, I never felt the rod but twice, and then very slightly. I have practised the same method with my children, who all of them died at nurse, except Leonora,[1] my only daughter, who escaped that misfortune, and has arrived to the age of six years and upward, without other correction for her childish faults (her mother's indulgence easily concurring) than words only, and those very gentle; and, though my expectation should be frustrated, there are other causes enough to lay the fault on, without blaming my discipline, which I know to be natural and just. I should in this have been even more scrupulous towards males, as born to less subjection, and more free; I should have loved to swell their hearts with ingenuousness and freedom. I have never observed other effects of whipping unless to render children more cowardly or more wilful and obstinate.

Violence in the education of children condemned.

Do we desire to be beloved of our children? would we remove from them all occasion of wishing our death (though no occasion of so horrid a wish can either be just or excusable, *Nullum scelus rationem habet:* "No crime can have a reason")? Let us reasonably accommodate their lives with what is in our power. In order to this, we should not marry so young that our age shall in a manner be confounded with theirs; for this inconvenience plunges us into many very great difficulties; I speak more especially of the gentry who are of a condition wherein they have little to do, and live, as the phrase is, upon their income; for, in other conditions, where life is dedicated to making money, the plurality and numbers of children is an

The true way for parents to gain the love of their children.

[1] Montaigne speaks again of his daughter in Book iii. c. 5. She was afterwards married to the Viscount de Gamaches.

increase to good husbandry, and they are so many new tools and instruments wherewith to grow rich.

The most proper age for marriage.

I married at three-and-thirty years of age, and agree in the opinion for thirty-five, which is said to be that of Aristotle.[1] Plato will have nobody marry before thirty, but he has reason to laugh at those who undertake the work of marriage after five and fifty, and to condemn their offspring as unworthy of aliment and life. Thales gave it the truest limits, who when young, and being importuned by his mother to marry, answered, "That it was too soon;" and being grown in years, and urged again, "That it was too late."[2] A man must deny opportunity to every importunate action. The ancient Gauls[3] looked upon it as a very great reproach for a man to have to do with a woman before he was twenty years of age; and strictly recommended to the men who designed themselves for war the keeping their virginity till well grown in years, forasmuch as courage is abated and diverted by the use of women:—

The use of women enervates young men.

> Ma or congiunto à giovinetta sposa,
> E lieto omai, de' figli, era invilito
> Ne gli affetti di padre e di marito.[4]
>
> "But now being married to a fair young wife,
> He's quite fall'n off from his old course of life:
> His mettle is grown rusty, and his care
> His wife and children do betwixt them share."

Muleasses,[5] King of Tunis, he whom the Emperor Charles the Fifth restored to the kingdom, reproached the memory of his father, Mahomet, with the frequentation of women, styling him loose, effeminate, and a getter of children. The Greek History observes of Iccus, the Tarentine, of Crisso, Astyllus, Diopompus, and others, that, to keep their bodies in order for the Olympic games, and such like exercises, they

[1] At the end of the *Sixth Book of the Republic;* but Aristotle says, from thirty to thirty-five.

[2] Diogenes Laert. *in Vitâ.*

[3] What Montaigne ascribes here to the Gauls, Cæsar says expressly of the Germans, *De Bello Gallico*, vi. 21, "Qui diutissimé impuberes permanserunt, maximam inter suos ferunt laudem," &c.

[4] Tasso, *Jerusalem*, lib. x. stanza 39.

[5] Muley Hassan.

denied themselves during that preparation all commerce with Venus. In a certain country of the Spanish Indies, men were not permitted to marry till after they were forty years of age, and yet the girls were allowed to do so at ten. 'Tis not time for a gentleman of five-and-thirty years old to give place to his son who is twenty; he being himself in a condition to serve both in the camp and court of his prince, he has himself need of all his money; and yet, doubtless ought to allow his son a share, but not so great a one as wholly to disfurnish himself; and for such a one, the saying that fathers have ordinarily in their mouths, "I will not put off my clothes till I go to bed," is proper enough.

A father that is superannuated ought to give up his estate to his child.

But a father, worn out with age and infirmities, and deprived, by his weakness and want of health, of the common society of men, wrongs himself and his, to rake together a great mass of useless treasure. He has lived long enough, if he be wise, to have a mind to strip himself to go to bed; not to his very shirt, I confess, but to that and a good warm night-gown. The remaining pomps, of which he has no further use, he ought voluntarily to surrender to those to whom by the order of nature they belong. 'Tis reason he should transfer the use of those things to them, seeing that nature has reduced him to such a state that he cannot enjoy them himself; otherwise there is, doubtless, ill-nature and envy in the case. The greatest act of the Emperor Charles the Fifth was that, in imitation of some of the ancients of his own quality, confessing it but reason to strip ourselves when our clothes encumber and grow too heavy for us, and to lie down when our legs begin to fail us, he resigned his possessions, grandeur, and power to his son, when he found himself beginning to lose the vigour and steadiness necessary to conduct his affairs, with the glory he had therein acquired.

> Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
> Peccet ad extremum, ridendus, et ilia ducat.[1]

[1] Horace, *Epist.* i. 1, 8.

"Loose from the rapid car your aged horse,
Lest in the race, derided, left behind,
Jaded he drags his limbs and burst his wind."

This fault of not perceiving betimes, and not being sensible of the feebleness and extreme alteration that age naturally brings, both upon the body and the mind (which in my opinion is equal, if the soul, indeed, is not more than the half), has lost the reputation of most of the great men of the world. I have known in my time, and have been intimately acquainted with some persons of very great quality whom a man might easily discern so manifestly fallen from that former sufficiency I was sure they were once endued with, by the reputation they had acquired in their former years, that I could heartily, for their own sakes, have wished them at home at their ease, discharged from those public and military employments which were now grown too heavy for their shoulders. I was formerly very familiar in a gentleman's house, a widower, and very old, though healthy and cheerful enough. This gentleman had several daughters to marry, and a son, already of a ripe age, which brought upon him many visits, and a great expense, neither of which did very well please him, not only out of consideration of frugality, but yet more for having, by reason of his age, entered into a course of life far differing from ours. I told him, one day, a little boldly, as I have been used to do, that he would do better to give us room, and to leave his principal house (for he had but that well situated and furnished) to his son, and retire himself to an estate he had hard by, where nobody would trouble his repose, seeing he could not otherwise avoid being importuned by us, the condition of his children considered. He took my advice afterwards, and found an advantage by so doing.

I do not mean that a man should so instate them as not to reserve to himself a liberty to recant; I, who am now arrived to the age wherein such things are nigh fit to be done, would resign to them the enjoyment of my house and goods, but with a power of revocation, if they should give me cause to

alter my mind. I would leave to them the use, that being no longer proper for me; but of the general authority and power over all, I would reserve as much as I thought good to myself; having always thought that it must needs be a great satisfaction to an aged father, to put his children himself in the way of governing his affairs, and to have power, during his life, to superintend their behaviour, supplying them with instruction and advice from his own experience, and himself to transfer the ancient honour and order of his house into the hands of those who are to succeed him, and by that means to be responsible to himself (by the hopes he may conceive) for their future conduct. And in order to this, I would not avoid their company; I would observe them near at hand, and partake, according to the condition of my age, of their feasts and amusements. If I did not live amongst them (which I could not do without being a disturbance to them, by reason of the touchiness of my age, and the restlessness of my infirmities, and without violating also the rules and order of living I should then have set down to myself), I would at least live near them in some part of my house, not the best in show, but the most commodious. Not as I saw, some years ago, a Dean of St. Hilaire, of Poictiers, by his melancholy given up to such a solitude that, at the time I came into his chamber, it had been two-and-twenty years that he had not stepped one foot out of it, and yet had all his motions free, and ate, and was in perfect health, saving a little rheum that fell upon his lungs. He would hardly once in a week suffer any one to come to see him; he always kept himself shut up in his chamber, alone, except a servant that brought him something to eat, and did then but just come in and go out again. His employment was to walk up and down, and read some book, for he was a bit of a scholar; but as to the rest, obstinately bent to die in his retirement, as he soon after did. I would endeavour, by a sweet and obliging conversation, to create in my children a lively and unfeigned friendship and good-will, which, in well-descended natures, is

not hard to do; for if they be brutes, of which this age of ours produces thousands, we must hate and avoid them as such.

Children ought not to be forbid to call their father by the name of father.

I am angry at the custom of forbidding children to call their father by the name of father, and to enjoin them another, as more full of respect and reverence, as if nature had not sufficiently provided for our authority. We call God father, and disdain to have our children call us so. I have reformed this error in my family.[1] It is also folly and injustice to deprive children, when grown up, of a familiarity with their father, and to carry an austere countenance toward them, thinking by that to keep them in awe and obedience; for it is but a very idle farce that, instead of producing the effect designed, renders fathers distasteful and, which is worse, ridiculous, to their own children. They have youth and vigour in possession, and consequently the breath and favour of the world, and therefore receive these fierce and tyrannical looks (mere scarecrows) of a man without blood, either in his heart or veins, with mockery and contempt. Though I could make myself feared, I had yet much rather make myself beloved. There are so many sorts of defects in old age, so much impotency, and it is so liable to contempt, that the best purchase a man can make is the kindness and affection of his own family; command and fear are no longer his weapons. Such a one I have known, who, having been very imperious in his youth, when he came to be old, though he might have lived at his full ease and had his judgment as entire as ever, would yet torment himself and others; strike, rant, swear, and curse; the most tempestuous master in France; fretting himself with unnecessary suspicion and vigilance. And all this rumble and clutter but makes his family

Children that are grown up ought to be admitted to a familiarity with their fathers.

[1] The good King Henry IV. reformed it also in his family; for Perefixe says he would not have his children call him Monsieur, an appellation which seems to make the father and the children strangers, and which is a mark of subjection and slavery; but that they should call him papa, or father, an appellation of love and tenderness.

cheat him the sooner and the more; of his barn, his kitchen, cellar, nay, and his very purse too, others have the greatest use and share, whilst he keeps his keys in his bosom much more carefully than his eyes. Whilst he hugs himself with the frugality of the pitiful pittance of a wretched niggardly table, every thing goes to wreck and ruin in every corner of his house, in play, drink, all sorts of profusion, making sports in their junketings with his vain anger and fruitless parsimony. Every one is a sentinel against him; and if by accident any wretched fellow that serves him is of another humour, and will not join with the rest, he is presently rendered suspected to him, a bait which old age very easily bites at of itself. How often has this gentleman boasted to me in how great awe he kept his family, and how exact an obedience and reverence they paid him! How clearly he saw into his own affairs!

Ille solus nescit omnia.[1]

"He alone knows nothing of the matter."

I do not know any one that can muster more parts, both natural and acquired, proper to maintain such a dominion, than he; yet he is fallen from it like a child. For this reason it is that I have picked him out amongst several others that I know of the same humour, for the greatest example. It were matter for a question in the schools, "Whether he is better thus or otherwise?" In his presence all submit to, and bow before him, and give so much way to his vanity that nobody ever resists him; he has his bellyful of cringe, and all postures of fear, submission, and respect. Does he turn away a servant? he packs up his bundle, and is gone,—but 'tis no further than just out of his sight; the pace of old age is so slow, and the senses so weak and troubled, that he will live and do his old office in the same house a year together without being perceived. And after a fit interval of time, letters are pretended to come from a great

[1] Terence, *Adelp.* iv. 2, 9.

way off, very pitiful, suppliant, and full of promises of amendment, by virtue of which he is again received into favour. Does Monsieur make any bargain, or send away any dispatch that does not please? 'Tis suppressed, and causes afterwards forged to excuse the want of execution in the one or answer in the other. No strange letters are first brought to him; he never sees any but those that seem fit for his knowledge. If by accident they fall first into his own hand, being used to trust somebody to read them to him, he reads extempore what he thinks fit, and very often makes such a one ask him pardon, who abuses and rails at him in his letter. In short, he sees nothing but by an image prepared and designed beforehand, and the most satisfactory they can invent not to rouse and awake his ill-humour and choler. I have, under different forms, seen enough of long and enduring management to just the same effect.

Women have a sort of natural tendency to cross their husbands;[1] they lay hold with both hands on all occasions to contradict and oppose them, and the first excuse serves for a plenary justification. I have seen a wife who grossly purloined from her husband, that, as she told her confessor, she might distribute more liberal alms. As if anybody would believe a word of this religious dispensation. No authority seems to them of sufficient dignity, if proceeding from the husband's assent; they must usurp it either by insolence or cunning, and always injuriously, or else it has not the grace of that authority they desire. When, as in the case I am speaking of, 'tis against a poor old man, and for the children, they make use of this title to serve their passion with glory; and, as in a common servitude, easily monopolize against his government and dominion. If they be men, strong, and flourishing in health and manhood, they presently corrupt, either by force or favour, both steward, receivers, and all the

[1] Mr. Cotton's gallantry, or his desire to save the credit of Montaigne with the ladies, induced him to diminish the effect of this shameful calumny upon our better halves, by this addition—"Women, *especially the perverse and elder sort*,"—a modification which I cannot refrain from preserving in the form of a note, though Montaigne himself, by an oversight, doubtless, neglected to make it.

rest. Such as have neither wife nor son do not so easily fall into this misfortune; when they do, it is more cruelly and undeservedly. Cato the Elder, in his time, said, "So many servants, so many enemies."[1] Consider, then, whether, according to the vast difference betwixt the purity of the age he lived in and the corruption of this of ours, he does not seem to advertise us that wife, son, and servant, are so many enemies to us? 'Tis well for old age that it is always accompanied with stupidity, ignorance, and a facility of being deceived; for, should we see how we are used, and would not acquiesce, what would become of us?—especially in such an age as this, where the very judges who are to determine are usually partial to the young in any cause that comes before them.[2] In case that the discovery of this cheat escape me, I cannot at least fail to discern that I am very fit to be cheated; and can a man ever enough speak the value of a friend, in comparison with these civil ties? The very image of it which I see so pure and uncorrupted in beasts, how religiously do I respect it! If others deceive me, yet I do not at least deceive myself in thinking I am able to defend myself from them, or in wearing out my brains to make myself so? I protect myself from such treasons in my own bosom, not by an unquiet and tumultuary curiosity, but rather by diversion and resolution. When I hear talk of any one's condition, I never trouble me to think of him, I presently turn my eyes upon myself, to see in what condition I am. Whatever concerns another relates to me; the accident that has befallen him gives me caution and rouses me to turn my defence that way. We every day and every hour say things of another that we might more properly say of ourselves, could we but revert our observation to our own concerns as well as extend it to others. And several authors have in this manner prejudiced their own cause by running headlong upon those they attack, and darting those shafts against their ene-

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 47. Macrobius, *Saturnal.* i. 11.

[2] The author seems to hint that the judges were young men themselves

mies that are more properly, and with greater advantage, to be returned upon them.

The late Marshal de Montluc, having lost his son, who died in the Island of Madeira, in truth a very brave gentleman, and of great expectation, did to me, amongst his other regrets, very much insist upon what a sorrow and heart-breaking it was to him that he had never made himself familiarly acquainted with him; and, by that humour of fatherly gravity and grimace, had lost the opportunity of having an insight into, and of well knowing, his son; as also of letting him know the extreme affection he had for him, and the worthy opinion he had of his virtue. "The poor boy," said he, "never saw in me other than a stern and disdainful countenance; and is gone in a belief that I neither knew how to love or esteem him according to his desert. For whom did I reserve the discovery of that singular affection I had for him in my soul? Was it not he himself who ought to have had all the pleasure of it, and all the obligation? I forced and wracked myself to put on and maintain this vain disguise, and have by that means deprived myself of the pleasure of his conversation, and, I doubt, in some measure of his affection; which could not but be very cold towards me, having never other from me than austerity; nor felt other than a tyrannical manner of proceeding."[1] I find this complaint to be rational and rightly apprehended; for as I myself know, by too certain experience, there is not so sweet a consolation in the loss of friends as the consciousness of having had no reserve with them, to have had with them a perfect and entire communication. Oh, my friend![2] am I the better for being sensible of this; or am I the worse? I am doubtless much the better. I am comforted and honoured in the sorrow for his death. Is it not a pious,

[1] "Je ne puis lire qu'avec les larmes aux yeux, dans les Essais de Montaigne, ce que fit le Mareschal de Montluc du regrèt qu'il a de ne s'être pas communiqué à son fils, et de lui avoir laissé ignorer de la tendresse qu'il avoit pour lui. C'est à Madame d'Estissac, *De l'amour des pères envers leurs enfants.* Mon Dieu, que ce livre est plein de bon sens."—*Mad. de Sévigné, lettre à sa fille.*

[2] This apostrophe is addressed to La Boëtie.

a pleasing office of my life to be always upon my friend's obsequies? Can there be any joy equal to this privation?

I open myself to my family as much as I can, and very willingly let them know in what state they are in my opinion and good will, as I do to everybody else. I make haste to bring out and produce myself to them; for I will not have them mistaken in me in any thing. Amongst other particular customs of our ancient Gauls, this, as Cæsar reports, was one, —that the sons never presented themselves before their fathers, nor durst ever appear in their company in public, till they began to bear arms;[1] as if they would intimate, by that, that then was also time for the fathers to receive them into their familiarity and acquaintance.

I have observed yet another sort of indiscretion in fathers of my time, that, not contented with having deprived their children, during their own long lives, of the share they naturally ought to have had in their fortunes, they after leave to their wives the same authority over their estates, and liberty to dispose of them according to their own fancy; and I have known a certain lord, one of the principal officers of the crown, who having in his prospect, by right of succession, above fifty thousand crowns yearly revenue, died necessitous and overwhelmed with debt, at above fifty years of age; his mother, in an extreme decrepitude, being yet in possession of all his estates by the will of his father, who had, for his part, lived till near eighty years old. This appears by no means reasonable to me. And therefore I think it of very little advantage to a man, whose affairs are well enough, to seek a wife that will charge his estate with too great a jointure; there being no sort of foreign debt or incumbrance that brings greater and more frequent ruin to estates and families than that. My predecessors have ever been aware of that danger, and provided against it, and so have I. But those who dissuade us from rich wives, for fear they should be less tractable and kind, are out in their advice to make a man lose

[1] *De Bello Gall.* vi. 18.

a real convenience for so frivolous a conjecture. It costs an unreasonable woman no more to pass over one reason than another. The more she is in the wrong the better. Injustice allures such, as the honour of their virtuous actions does the good; the more riches women bring with them, the more likely they are to be so much the more gentle and sweet-natured; as women, the fairer they are, are the more inclined to be proudly chaste.

'Tis reasonable to leave the administration of affairs to the mothers during the minority of the children; but the father has brought them up very ill if he cannot hope that, when they come to maturity, they will have more wisdom and dexterity in the management of their affairs than his wife, considering the ordinary weakness of the sex. It were, notwithstanding, to say the truth, more against nature to make the mothers depend upon the discretion of their children. They ought to be plentifully provided for, to maintain themselves according to their quality and age, by reason that necessity is much more unbecoming and insupportable to them than to men; and therefore the son is rather to be cut short than the mother.

The most prudent distribution of estates.

In general, the most judicious distribution of our goods, when we come to die, is, in my opinion, to let them be distributed according to the custom of the country. The laws have considered it better than we, and 'tis better to let them fail in their election than rashly to run the hazard of miscarrying in ours. Neither are they properly ours, since, by a civil prescription, and without us, they are all judged to certain successors. And although we have some liberty beyond that, yet I think that we ought not, without great and manifest cause, to take away that from one which his fortune has allotted him, and to which the public equity gives him title; and that it is against reason to abuse this liberty, in making it serve our own frivolous and private fancies. My destiny has been kind to me, in not furnishing me with occasions to tempt and divert my affection

from the common and legitimate institution. I see some with whom 'tis time lost to employ a long diligence of good offices; a word ill taken obliterates ten years' merit; he is the happy man who is in a condition to oil their good will at the last passage. The last action carries it; not the best and most frequent offices, but the most recent and present, do the work. These are people that play with their wills, as with apples and rods, to gratify or chastise every action of those that pretend to an interest in them. 'Tis a thing of too great weight and consequence to be so tumbled and tossed and altered every moment; and wherein wise men determine once for all, having therein, above all things, a regard to reason, and to what is publicly observed. We lay male inheritance too much to heart, proposing a ridiculous eternity to our names. We are, moreover, too superstitious in the vain conjectures of futurity, which we derive from those little observations we make of the words and actions of children. Perhaps they might have done me an injustice in dispossessing me of my rank, for having been the most dull and heavy, the most slow and unwilling at my book, not of all my brothers only, but of all the boys in the whole province; whether at my lesson or at any bodily exercise. 'Tis a folly to make an extraordinary election upon the credit of these divinations, wherein we are so often deceived. If the rule of primogeniture were to be violated, and the destinies corrected in the choice they have made of our heirs, one might more plausibly do it upon the account of some enormous personal deformity; a constant and incorrigible vice, and, in the opinion of us French, who are great admirers of beauty, of important prejudice.

Plato's opinion that the disposition of estates should be regulated by the laws.

The pleasant dialogue betwixt Plato's legislator and his citizens will be an ornament to this place. "What," said they, feeling themselves about to die, "may we not dispose of our own to whom we please? Gods, what cruelty, that it shall not be lawful for us, according as we have been served and attended in our sickness, in old age, and other affairs, to

give more or less to those whom we have found most diligent about us, at our own fancy and discretion!" To which the legislator answers thus: "My friends, who are now, without question, very soon to die, it is hard for you either to know yourselves, or what is yours, according to the Delphic inscription. I, who make the laws, am of opinion that you neither are yourselves your own, neither is that yours of which you are possessed. Both your goods and you belong to your families, as well those past as those to come; but yet, both your family and goods do much more appertain to the public. Wherefore, lest any flatterers in your age, or in your sickness, or any passion of your own, should unseasonably prevail with you to make an unjust will, I shall take care to prevent that impropriety. But, having respect both to the universal interest of the city, and that of your particular family, I shall establish laws, and make it appear that a particular convenience ought to give place to the common benefit. Go then cheerfully where human necessity calls you. It belongs to me, who have no more respect to one thing than another, and who, as much as in me lies, am careful of the public concern, to take care of what you leave behind you."[1]

'Tis dangerous to leave it in the power of the widows to share the succession of the fathers among their children.

To return to my subject: it appears to me that such women are very rarely born to whom the prerogative over men, the maternal and natural excepted, is in any sort due, unless it be for the punishment of such as in some lustful humour have voluntarily submitted themselves to them; but that does nothing concern the old ones, of whom we are now speaking. This consideration it is which has made us so willing to forge and give force to that law, which was never yet seen by any one, by which women are excluded the succession to this crown; and there is hardly a government in the world where it is not pleaded as 'tis here, by mere reason of the thing that gives it authority, though fortune has given it more credit in some places than in others. 'Tis dangerous

[1] Plato, *Laws*, xi.

to leave the disposal of our succession to their judgment, according to the choice they shall make of children, which is often fantastic and unjust; for the irregular appetite and depraved taste they have during the time of their being with child, they have at all other times in the mind. We commonly see them fond of the most weak, ricketty, and deformed children, or of those, if they have such, as are at the breast. For, not having sufficient force of reason to choose and embrace that which is most worthy, they the more willingly suffer themselves to be carried away, where the impressions of nature are most alone; like animals that know their young no longer than they give them suck. As to the rest, it is easy by experience to be discerned that this natural affection, to which we give so great authority, has but a very weak and shallow root. For a very little profit we every day ravish their own children out of their mother's arms, and make them take ours in their room. We make them abandon their own to some pitiful nurse, to which we disdain to commit ours, or to some she-goat; forbidding them not only to give them suck, what danger soever they run thereby, but moreover to take any manner of care of them, that they may wholly be taken up with the care of, and attendance upon, ours. And we see in most of them an adulterate affection, begot by custom toward the foster-children, more vehement than the natural, and greater solicitude for the preservation of those they have taken charge of than their own. And that which I was saying of goats was upon this account; that it is ordinary, all about where I live, to see the countrywomen, when they want suck of their own, to call goats to their assistance. And I have at this hour two footmen that never sucked women's milk more than eight days after they were born. These goats are immediately taught to come to suckle the little children, well knowing their voices when they cry, and come running to them; when, if any other than that they are acquainted with be

What stress may be laid on the natural affection of mothers to their children.

Goats trained to give suck to children.

presented to them, they refuse to let it suck; and the child will do the same to any other goat. I saw one the other day from whom they had taken away the goat that used to nourish it, by reason the father had only borrowed it of a neighbour, that would not touch any other they could bring, and died doubtless of hunger. Beasts do as easily alter and corrupt their natural affections as we. I believe that in what Herodotus[1] relates of a certain district of Libya there are many mistakes. He says,—"That the women are there in common; but that the child, so soon as it can go, finds him out in the crowd for his father, to whom he is first led by his natural inclination."

Books immortal children.

Now, in considering this simple reason for loving our children and calling them our second-selves, only because we begot them, it appears, methinks, that there is another kind of production proceeding from us that should no less recommend itself to our love; for that which we engender by the soul, the issue of our understanding, courage, and abilities, springs from nobler parts than those of the body, and that are much more our own; we are both father and mother together in this generation. These cost us a great deal more, and bring us more honour, if they have any thing of good in them. For the value of other children is much more theirs than ours; the share we have in them is very little; but of these all the beauty, all the grace and value, is ours. Thus 'tis that they more livelily represent and resemble us than the rest. Plato[2] adds that those are immortal children that immortalize their fathers, as Lycurgus, Solon, Minos. Now, histories being full of examples of the common affection of fathers to their children, it seems not altogether improper to introduce some few also of this other kind. Heliodorus, that good Bishop of Tricca, rather chose to lose the dignity, profit, and devotion,

[1] What Herodotus says, however, is that each child is regarded as belonging to the man whom he most resembles: τῷν ἂν οἴχῃ τῶν ἀνδρῶν. The other reading, ἦχῃ, is not received.

[2] In the *Phædo*.

of so venerable a prelacy, than to lose his daughter;[1] a daughter that continues to this day very graceful and comely, though, peradventure, a little too curiously and wantonly set off, and too amorous, for an ecclesiastic and sacerdotal daughter. There was one Labienus at Rome, a man of great worth and authority, and, amongst other good qualities, excellent in all sorts of literature, who was, as I take it, the son of that great Labienus, the chief of Cæsar's captains in the wars of Gaul, and who, afterwards siding with Pompey the Great, so valiantly maintained his cause, till he was by Cæsar defeated in Spain. This Labienus of whom I am now speaking had several enemies, jealous of his virtue, and, 'tis likely, courtiers and minions of the emperor of his time, who were very angry at, and displeased with, his freedom and the paternal humour which he yet retained against tyranny, with which, it is to be supposed, he had tinctured his books and writings. His adversaries, before the magistracy of Rome, prosecuted several pieces he had published, and prevailed so far against him as to have them condemned to the flames.[2] It was in him that this new example of punishment was begun, which was afterwards continued against several others at Rome, to punish even writing and studies with death. There would not be means and matter enough of cruelty did we not mix with them things that nature has exempted from all sense and suffering, as reputation and the products of mind, and if we did not communicate corporeal punishments to the learning and monuments of the muses. Now Labienus could not suffer this loss, nor survive these his so dear issue, and therefore caused himself to be conveyed and shut up alive in the monument of his ancestors, where he made shift to kill and bury himself at once. 'Tis hard to show a more violent paternal affection than this. Cassius Severus, a man of great eloquence, and

[1] Viz: his *Amorous History of Theagines and Chariclea, or Ethiopian History.* See Nicephorus, xii. 34. Bayle, *in verbo*, disputes the tradition.

[2] Seneca, *Rhetor. Controv.* v. It is doubtful whether this Labienus was the son of Cæsar's lieutenant. See Vossius, *de Hist. Lat.* i. 25.

his very intimate friend, seeing his books burn, cried out, "That by the same sentence they should also condemn him to the fire too, seeing that he carried in his memory all that they contained." The like misfortune befell Cremutius Cordus, who being accused for having in his books commended Brutus and Cassius, the dirty, servile, and degenerate senate, worthy a worse master than Tiberius, condemned his writings to the flames. He was willing to bear them company, and killed himself with fasting.[1] The good Lucan, being condemned by that rascal Nero, at the last gasp of his life, when the greater part of his blood was already gone by the veins of his arms, which he had caused his physician to open to make him die, and that the cold had seized on all his extremities, and began to approach his vital parts; the last thing he had in his memory was some of the verses of his battle of Pharsalia, which he repeated, and died with them in his mouth.[2] What was this but taking a tender and paternal leave of his children, in imitation of the farewell blessings and embraces wherewith we part with ours when we come to die; and an effect of that natural inclination that suggests to our remembrance, in this extremity, those things which were dearest to us during life?

Cordus's writings condemned to the fire.

Can we believe that Epicurus,[3] who, as he says himself, dying of intolerable pains of the cholic, had all his consolation in the beauty of the doctrine he left behind him, could have received the same satisfaction from many children, though never so well brought up, had he had them, as he did from the issue of so many rich and admirable writings? Or that, had it been in his choice to have left behind him a deformed and untoward child, or a foolish and ridiculous book, he, or any other man of his understanding, would not rather have chosen to have run the first misfortune than the other? It had been, perhaps, an impiety in St. Austin, for example,

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.* iv. 34.
[2] Id. *ib.* xv. 70.
[3] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, ix. 22 Cicero, *de Finib.* ii. 30.

if, on the one hand, it had been proposed to him to bury his writings, from which our religion has received so great advantage; or, on the other, to bury his children, had he had any, had he not rather chosen to bury his children? And I know not whether I had not much rather have begot a very beautiful one, through my society with the muses, than by lying with my wife. To this, such as it is, what I give it I give it absolutely, and irrevocably, as men do to their bodily children. That little I have done for it is no more at my own disposal. It may know many things that I have forgotten, and retain from me that which I have not retained myself; and that, as a stranger, I must borrow thence, should I stand in need. If I am wiser than my book, it is richer than I.

Of the affection which Montaigne had for his book.

There are few men addicted to poetry who would not be much prouder to be father to the Æneid than to the handsomest and best made youth of Rome, and that would not much better bear the loss of the one than the other. For, according to Aristotle,[1] the poet, of all sorts of artificers, is fondest of his work. 'Tis hard to believe that Epaminondas, who boasted that for all his posterity, he left two daughters behind him which would one day do their father honour, (meaning the two noble victories he obtained over the Lacedemonians)[2] would willingly have consented to exchange these for the most beautiful creatures of all Greece; or that Alexander, or Cæsar, ever wished to be deprived of the grandeur of their glorious exploits in war, for the convenience of having children and heirs, how perfect and accomplished soever. Nay, I make great question whether Phidias, or any other excellent statuary, would be so solicitous of the preservation and continuance of his natural children as he would be of a rare statue, which with long labour and study he had perfected according to art. And to those furious and irregular passions that have sometimes flamed in

[1] *Ethics*, ix. 7.

[2] Diod. Sic. xv. 87. Nepos, in his life of this great captain, makes him speak but of one daughter, the Battle of Leuctra.

fathers towards their own daughters, and in mothers towards their own sons; the like is also found in this other sort of parentage. Witness what is related of Pygmalion, who, having made the statue of a woman of singular beauty, fell so passionately in love with this work of his that the Gods, in pity of his passion, were fain to inspire it with life:—

> Tentatum mollescit ebur, positoque rigore
> Subsidit digitis.[1]
>
> "Hard though it was, beginning to relent,
> The iv'ry breast beneath his fingers bent."

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE ARMS OF THE PARTHIANS.

The ill custom of not being armed till the enemy is at the gates.

'Tis an ill custom, and a little unmanly, which the gentlemen of our time have got, not to put on their armour, but just upon the point of the most extreme necessity; and to lay it by again as soon as ever there is any show of the danger being a little over; whence many disorders arise; for every one bustling and running to his arms, just when he should go to the charge, had his cuirass to buckle on when his companions are already put to the rout. Our ancestors were wont to give their headpiece, lance, and gauntlets to carry, but never put off their other pieces so long as there was any work to be done. Our troops are now cumbered and rendered unsightly with the clutter of baggage and servants, that cannot be from their masters, by reason they carry their arms. Livy, speaking of our nation, *Intolerantissima laboris corpora vix arma humeris gerebant.*[2] "Their bodies were so impatient of

[1] Ovid, *Met.* x. 283.

[2] *Book* x. 28.

labour that they could scarcely endure to wear their armour." Many nations do yet, as anciently, go to war without defensive arms; or such, at least, as were of very little proof.

Tegmina queis capitum, raptus de subere cortex.[1]

" Who their temples only bind
With a light helm, made of the cork-tree rind."

Alexander, the most adventurous captain that ever was, very seldom wore armour; and such amongst us as slight it do not by that much harm the main concern; for if we see some killed for want of it, there are few less whom the lumber of armour helps to destroy, either by being overburdened, crushed, and cramped with its weight, by a rude shock, or otherwise. For, in plain truth, to observe the weight and thickness of that which we have now in use, it seems as if we only sought to defend ourselves; we are rather loaded, than secured, by it. We have enough to do to support its weight, manacled and immured, as if we were only to contend with the shock of our armour; and as if we had not the same obligation to defend it as it has to defend us. Tacitus[2] gives a pleasant description of the men-at-arms of our ancient Gauls, so armed as to be only able to move, without power to offend, or possibility to be offended, or to rise again when once beaten down. Lucullus, seeing certain soldiers of the Medes that made the front of Tigranes's army, heavily armed, and very uneasy, as if in prisons of iron, thence conceived hopes with great ease to defeat them; and by them began his charge and victory.[3] And now that our musqueteers are come into credit, I believe some invention will be found out to immure us for our safety, and draw us to the war in castles, such as those the ancients loaded their elephants withal.

The armour of the French too cumbersome, by its weight, to be proper for use.

This humour is far differing from that of the younger Scipio, who sharply reprehended his soldiers for having

[1] *Æneid*, vii. 742
[2] *Annal.* iii. 43.
[3] Plutarch, *in Vitâ.*

planted caltraps,[1] under water, in a part of the fosse by which those of the town he held besieged might sally out upon him; saying that those who assaulted should think of attacking, and not of fearing;[2] suspecting, with good reason, that this stop they had put to the enemy would make them less vigilant upon their duty. He said, also, to a young man showing him a fine buckler he had that he was very proud of: "It is a very fine buckler, indeed; but a Roman soldier ought to repose greater confidence in his right hand than in his left."

Now 'tis nothing but the not being used to wear them that makes the weight of our arms so intolerable:—

> L'usbergo in dosso haveano, e l'elmo in testa,
> Duo di questi guerrier, dei quali io canto;
> Nè notte o dì, dappoi ch' entraro in questa
> Stanza, gl' haveano mai messi da canto;
> Che facile a portar come la vesta
> Era lor, perchè in uso l'havean tanto.[3]

> "Two of these heroes whom I sing, had on
> Each his bright helm, and strong habergeon;
> And night nor day, nor one poor minute's space,
> Once laid them by whilst they were in this place;
> So long accustomed this weight to bear,
> Their clothes to them not lighter did appear."

Arms of Roman infantry, and their military discipline.

The Emperor Caracalla was wont continually to march on foot, completely armed, at the head of his army.[4] The Roman infantry always carried not only their helmet, sword, and shield (for as to arms, says Cicero, they were so accustomed to have them always on that they were no more trouble to them than their own limbs; *Arma enim, membra militis esse dicunt*);[5] but moreover, fifteen days' provision, together with a certain number of piles, or stakes, wherewith to fortify their camp, to sixty pounds' weight. And Marius's soldiers,[6] laden at

[1] A sort of *chevaux de frise*.

[2] Val. Max. iii. 7, 2. The Latin text merely says that this stratagem was proposed to Scipio, who refused to adopt it.

[3] Ariosto, xii. 30.

[4] Xiphilin, *in Vitâ*.

[5] *Tusc. Quæs.* ii. 16. Hence, in Latin, the analogy between *arma*, arms, with *armus*, the shoulder, and *armilla*, bracelets.

[6] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*.

the same rate, were inured to march in battalia five leagues in five hours; and sometimes, upon an urgent occasion, six. Their military discipline was much ruder than ours, and accordingly produced much greater effects. The younger Scipio, reforming his army in Spain, ordered his soldiers to eat standing, and nothing that was dressed.[1] The jeer that was given a Lacedemonian soldier is marvellously pat to the matter, who, in an expedition of war, was reproached to have been seen under the roof of a house. They were so inured to hardship that, let the weather be what it would, it was a shame to be seen under any other cover than the roof of heaven. We should not march our people very far at that rate.

As to what remains, Marcellinus, a man bred up in the Roman wars, curiously observes the manner of the Parthians arming themselves; and the rather for its being so different from that of the Romans. "They had," says he, "armour artificially woven, like so many little feathers, which did nothing hinder the motion of the body, and yet so hard that our darts hitting upon it would rebound."[2] (These were the coats of mail our forefathers were so constantly wont to use.) And in another place: "They had," says he, "strong and able horses, covered with thick tanned hides of leather, and were themselves armed cap-a-pie, with great plates of iron so artificially ordered that, in all parts of the limbs which required bending, they assisted motion. One would have said that they were men of iron; having armour for the head so neatly fitted, and so naturally representing the form of a face, that they were nowhere vulnerable, save at two little round holes that gave them a little light; and certain small chinks about their mouth and nostrils, through which they did, with great difficulty, breathe." Arms of the Parthians.

Flexilis inductis animatur lamina membris,
Horribilis visu; credas simulacra moveri

[1] Plutarch, *Apothegms*.

[2] Ammianus Marcellinus, a Latin historian, though, by birth, a Greek, who bore arms under the emperors Constantius, Julian, &c. lib. xxiv. cap. 7.

Ferrea, cognatoque viros spirare metallo.
Par vestitus equis, ferrata fronte minantur,
Ferratosque movent, securi vulneris, armos.[1]

"Stiff plates of steel over the body laid,
By armorer's skill so flexible were made
That, dreadful to be seen, you would them guess
Not to be men, but moving images;
The horse, like arm'd, spikes bore in fronts above,
And fearless they their iron shoulders move."

A description very near resembling the equipage of the men-at-arms in France, with their barbed horses. Plutarch says that Demetrius caused two complete suits of armour to be made for himself and for Alcimus, the first warrior about him, of six-score pounds weight each; whereas the ordinary suits weighed but half so much.[2]

CHAPTER X.

OF BOOKS.

I MAKE no doubt but that I often happen to speak of things that are much better, and more truly handled by those who are masters of the trade. You have here purely an essay of my natural, and not acquired, parts; and whoever shall take me tripping in my ignorance, will not in any sort displease me; for I should be very unwilling to become responsible to another for my writings, who am not so to myself, nor satisfied with them. Whoever goes in quest of knowledge, let him fish for it where it is to be found; there is nothing I so little profess. These are fancies of my own, by which I do not pretend to discover things, but to lay open myself. They may, perhaps, one day be known to me, or have for-

[1] Claudian, *in Ruf.* ii. 358.

[2] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, who tells the story somewhat differently.

merly been, according as fortune has put me upon a place where they have been explained; but I have forgotten them; and if I am a man of some reading, I am a man of no retention; so that I can promise no certainty, if not to make known to what point the knowledge I now have rises. Therefore let nobody insist upon the matter I write, but my method in writing it; let them observe in what I borrow, if I have known how to choose what is proper to raise or help the invention, which is always my own; for I make others say for me what, either for want of language, or want of sense, I cannot so well myself express. I do not number my borrowings, I weigh them. And had I designed to raise their value by their number, I had made them twice as many. They are all, or within a very few, so famed and ancient authors, that they seem, methinks, themselves sufficiently to tell who they are, without giving me the trouble.[1] In reasons, comparisons, and arguments, if I transplant any into my own soil, and confound them amongst my own, I purposely conceal the author to awe the temerity of those forward censurers that fall upon all sorts of writings, particularly the late ones, of men yet living, and in the vulgar tongue, forsooth, which puts, it would seem, every one into a capacity of judging, and which seems to convict the authors themselves of vulgar conception and design. I would have them give Plutarch a fillip on my nose, and put themselves in a heat with railing against Seneca, when they think they rail at me. I must shelter my own weakness under these great reputations. I shall love any one that can unplume me, that is, by clearness of understanding and judgment, and by the sole distinction of the force and beauty of reason; for I, who, for want of memory, am at every turn at a loss to pick them out by their

Why Montaigne did not choose to name the authors from whom he quoted.

[1] It was not till after Montaigne's death that his editor undertook to name the authors whom he had quoted. And this was rather attempted than executed up to the edition of M. Buchon (whence the present translation is corrected and enlarged), which not only shows the places whence Montaigne quoted those passages, but also many others, which he had only referred to in a very loose manner, though he had inserted the sense of them in his work.

national livery, am yet wise enough to know, by the measure of my own abilities, that my soil is incapable of producing any of those rich flowers that I there find set and growing; and that all the fruits of my own growth are not worth any one of them. For this, indeed, I hold myself responsible, though the confession make against me; if there be any vanity and vice in my writings, which I do not of myself perceive, nor can discern, when pointed out to me by another; for many faults escape the eye, but the infirmity of judgment consists in not being able to discern them, when, by another, laid open to us. Knowledge and truth may be in us without judgment, and judgment also without them; but the confession of ignorance is one of the fairest and surest testimonies of judgment that I know. I have no other officer to put my writings in rank and file, but fortune. As things come into my head I heap them in; sometimes they advance in whole bodies, sometimes in single files. I am content that every one should see my natural and ordinary pace, ill as it is. I let myself jog on at my own rate and ease. Neither are these subjects which a man is not permitted to be ignorant in, or casually, and at a venture, to discourse of. I could wish to have a more perfect knowledge of things, but I will not buy it so dear as it will cost My design is to pass over easily, and not laboriously, the remainder of my life. There is nothing that I will break my brain about; no, not knowledge, of what price soever.

What he aimed to find in books.

I seek, in the reading of books, only to please myself by an irreproachable diversion; or if I study, it is for no other science than what treats of the knowledge of myself, and instructs me how to live and die well:—

Has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus.[1]

"I to this only course
Train up, and in it only breathe my horse."

I do not bite my nails about the difficulties I meet with in my

[1] Propertius, iv. 1, 70.

reading; after a charge or two I give them over. Should I insist upon them, I should both lose myself and time; for I have an impatient understanding that must be satisfied at once; what I do not discern at first, by persisting, becomes still more obscure. I do nothing without gayety; continuation, and a too obstinate endeavour, darkens, stupefies, and tires my judgment. My sight is confounded and dissipated with poring; I must withdraw it, and refer the discovery to new attempts; just as, to judge rightly of the lustre of scarlet, we are taught to pass it lightly over with the eye, in running it over at several sudden and reiterated views and glances. If one book does not please me, I take another, and never meddle with any but at such times as I am weary of doing nothing. I care not much for new ones, because the old seem fuller, and of stronger reason; neither do I much tamper with Greek authors, for my judgment loves not to occupy itself on matters which I know but superficially.[1] Amongst those that are simply pleasant of the moderns, Boccaccio's Decameron, Rabelais, and the Basia of Johannes Secundus, if those may be ranged under that title, are worth reading. As to the Amadises, and such kind of stuff, they had not the credit to take me, so much as in my childhood. And I will moreover say (whether boldly or rashly), that this old, heavy soul of mine, is now no longer delighted with Ariosto, no, nor with the good fellow Ovid; his facility and invention, with which I was formerly so ravished, are now of no relish, and I can hardly have the patience to read him. I speak my opinion freely of all things, even of those that, perhaps, exceed my capacity, and that I do not conceive to be in anywise under my jurisdiction. The judgment I deliver is to show the measure of my own sight, and not that of the things. When I find myself disgusted with Plato's Axiochus, as with a work, considering

Montaigne preferred the writings of the ancients to the moderns.

What he thought of Ovid in the decline of his life.

[1] Montaigne takes other occasions to declare, more distinctly, his ignorance of Greek; yet we find him often quoting passages from that language.

who the author was, without force, my judgment does not believe itself;[1] it is not so arrogant as to oppose the authority of so many other famous judgments of antiquity, which it considers as its directors and masters, and with whom it is rather content to err; in such a case it condemns itself, either for stopping at the outer bark, not being able to penetrate to the heart, or for considering it by some false light, and is content with securing itself from trouble and error only; and, as to its own weakness, does frankly acknowledge and confess it. It thinks it gives a just interpretation, according to the appearance that its conceptions present to it; but they are weak and imperfect. Most of the Fables of Æsop, have several meanings; those who mythologized them chose some aspect that quadrates well to the Fable; but for the most part, 'tis but the first face that presents itself, and but superficial; there yet remain others more lively, essential, and profound, into which they have not been able to penetrate; and just so do I.

But to proceed. I have always thought that, in poetry, Virgil, Lucretius, Catullus, and Horace, do many degrees excel the rest, and signally, Virgil in his *Georgics*, which I look upon as the most finished work in poetry; in comparison of which a man may easily discern that there are some places in his *Æneids* to which the author would have given a little more of the file, had he had leisure; the fifth book of his *Æneids* seems to me the most perfect. I also love Lucan, and willingly read him; not so much for his style as for his own worth, and the truth and solidity of his opinions and judgments. As for my good Terence, the standard of all that is charming and eloquent in the Latin tongue, I find in him so admirable and lively a representation of our manners and

His opinion of Virgil;

Of Lucan;

Of Terence;

[1] The *Axiochus* is not by Plato, and Laertius had already admitted this. It was for a long time attributed to Æschines, the Socratician (see the edition by Jean LeClerc, Amsterdam, 1711); others have given it to Xenocrates, the Chalcedonian. Be this as it may, the dialogue is one of very great antiquity.

the movements of the soul, that our actions throw me at every turn upon him; and I cannot read him so oft that I do not still discover some new grace and beauty. Such as lived near Virgil's time were scandalized that some should compare him with Lucretius. I am of opinion that the comparison is, in truth, very unequal; a belief that, nevertheless, I have much ado to assure myself in, when I meet with some excellent passages in Lucretius. But, if they were so angry at this comparison, what would they have said of the brutish and barbarous stupidity of those who, at this hour, compare Ariosto with him? and what would Ariosto himself say?

Of Lucretius.

> O sæculum insipiens, et infacetum! [1]
>
> "O foolish, tasteless age!"

I think the ancients had more reason to be angry with those who compared Plautus to Terence (though he smacks more of his man), than Lucretius to Virgil. It makes much for the honour and preference of Terence that the father of Roman eloquence had him alone so often in his mouth, and the sentence that the best judge of Roman poets has passed upon the other.[2] I have often observed that those of our times who take upon them to write comedies (as well as the Italians, who are happy enough in that way of writing), take in three or four arguments of those of Plautus or Terence to make one of theirs, and crowd five or six of Boccaccio's novels into one single comedy. That which makes them so load themselves with matter is the diffidence they have of being able to support themselves with their own strength. They must find out something to lean on; and, having not of their own wherewith to entertain the audience, bring in the story to

Of Plautus, as compared with Terence.

[1] Catullus, xli. 8

[2] Horace, who says in his *Arte Poeticâ*, ver. 270, &c.:—

> At nostri proavi Plautinos et numeros, et
> Laudavere sales, nimium patienter, utrumque,
> Non dicam stultè, mirati.
>
> "And yet our sires with joy could Plautus hear;
> Gay were his jests, his numbers charm'd their ear;
> Let me not say too lavishly they prais'd,
> But sure their judgment was full cheaply pleas'd."

supply the defect of language. It is quite otherwise with my author;[1] the beauty, the perfection of his way of speaking, makes us lose the appetite for his plot. His fine expression, elegance, and quaintness, is everywhere taking; he is so pleasant throughout,

Liquidus, puroque simillimus amni;[2]
"Liquid, and like a crystal running stream;"

and does so possess the soul with his graces that we forget those of his fable. This very consideration carries me further; I observe that the best and most ancient poets have avoided the affectation and hunting after, not only of fantastic Spanish and Petrarchic elevations, but even the softest and most gentle touches, which are the ornaments of the poetry of succeeding times. And yet there is no good judgment that will condemn this in the ancients, and that does not incomparably more admire the equal polish and the perpetual sweetness and flourishing beauty of Catullus's Epigrams than all the stings with which Martial arms the tails of his. This is by the same reason that I gave before, as Martial says of himself: *Minus illi ingenio laborandum fuit, in cujus locum materia successerat.*[3] "His subject was so fruitful that he had the less need for the exercise of his wit." The first, without being moved or putting themselves out at all, make themselves sufficiently felt; they have matter enough of laughter throughout, they need not tickle themselves. The others have need of foreign assistance; as they have the less wit, they must have the more body; they mount on horseback, because they are not able to stand on their own legs. As in our balls, those mean fellows that teach to dance not being able to represent the port and dignity of our gentry, are fain to supply it with dangerous jumpings, and other strange motions and fantastic tricks. And the ladies are less put to it in dances where there are several *coupées*, changes, and quick motions of

Comparison betwixt Catullus and Martial.

[1] Terence. [2] Horace, *Epist.* ii. 2. 120 [3] Martial, *Præf.* lib. xxviii.

body, than in some others of a more quiet kind, where they are only to move a natural pace, and to represent their ordinary grace and port; and as I have often seen good merry-andrews, who, in their own every-day clothes, and with their ordinary face, give us all the pleasure of their art, when their apprentices, not yet arrived to such perfection, are fain to meal their faces, put themselves into a ridiculous disguise, and make a hundred faces, to get us to laugh. This conception of mine is nowhere more demonstrable than in comparing the *Æneid* with *Orlando Furioso;* we see the first on outspread wing, with lofty and sustained flight, always following his point; the latter, fluttering and hopping from tale to tale, as from branch to branch, not daring to trust his wings but in very short flights, and perching at every turn lest his breath and force should fail.

Comparison between the Æneid and the Orlando Furioso of Ariosto.

Excursusque breves tentat.[1]

"He tries short flights."

These, then, as to this sort of subjects, are the authors that best please me.

As to what concerns my other reading, that mixes a little more profit with the pleasure, and whence I learn how to marshal my opinions and qualities; the books that serve me to this purpose are Plutarch (since he has been translated into French) and Seneca. Both of them have this great convenience suited to my humour, that the knowledge I there seek is discoursed in some pieces that do not require any great trouble of reading long, of which I am incapable. Such are the minor works of the first, and the *Epistles* of the latter, which are the best and most profitable of all their writings. 'Tis no great undertaking to take one of them in hand, and I give over at pleasure; for they have no chain or dependence upon one another. These authors, for the most part, concur in all use-

The characters of Plutarch and Seneca.

[1] Virg. *Georg.* iv. 1.

ful and true opinions; and there is this further parallel betwixt them, that fortune brought them into the world about the same age; they were both tutors to the Roman emperors; both sought out from foreign countries; both rich, and both powerful. Their instructions are the cream of philosophy, and delivered after a plain and pertinent manner. Plutarch is more uniform and constant; Seneca more various and undulating. The last toiled, set himself, and bent his whole force to fortify virtue against frailty, fear, and vicious appetites. The other seems more to slight their power; he disdains to alter his pace, or stand upon his guard. Plutarch's opinions are Platonic, gentle, and accommodated to civil society; those of the other are Stoical and Epicurean, more remote from common use, but, in my opinion, more proper for private sanction and more firm. Seneca would seem to lean a little to the tyranny of the emperors of his time, but only seems; for I hold it for certain that he spake against his judgment when he condemns the generous action of those who assassinated Cæsar. Plutarch is frank throughout; Seneca abounds with brisk touches and sallies; Plutarch with things that heat and move you more; this contents and pays you better; he guides us, the other pushes us on.

Opinion of Cicero;

As to Cicero, those of his works that are most useful to my design are they that treat of philosophy, especially moral. But, boldly to confess the truth (for since one has stepped over the barriers of impudence there is no checking one's self), his way of writing, and that of all other long-winded authors, appears to me very tedious; for his prefaces, definitions, divisions, and etymologies, take up the greatest part of his work; whatever there is of life and marrow is smothered and lost in the preparation. When I have spent an hour in reading him (which is a great deal for me), and try to recollect what I have thence extracted of juice and substance, for the most part I find nothing but wind; for he is not yet come to the arguments that serve to his purpose, and the reasons that should properly help to

loose the knot I would untie. For me, who only desire to become more wise, not more learned or eloquent, these logical or Aristotelian dispositions of parts are of no use. I would have a man begin with the main proposition, and that wherein the force of the argument lies; I know well enough what death and pleasure are; let no man give himself the trouble to anatomize them to me; I look for good and solid reasons at the first dash to instruct me how to stand the shock, and resist them; to which purpose neither grammatical subtleties, nor the ingenious contexture of words and arguments, are of any use at all. I am for discourses that give the first charge into the heart of the doubt; his languish about his subjects, and delay our expectation. They are proper for the schools, for the bar, and for the pulpit, where we have leisure to nod, and may awake a quarter of an hour after, time enough to find again the thread of the discourse. It is necessary to speak after this manner to judges, whom a man has a design, right or wrong, to incline to favour his cause; to children and common people, to whom a man must say all he can, and try what effects his eloquence can produce. I would not have an author make it his business to render me attentive; or that he should cry out fifty times *O yes*, as the clerks and heralds do. The Romans, in their religious exercises, began with *Hoc age;* as we in ours do with *Sursum corda*, which are so many words lost to me; I come thither already fully prepared from my chamber. I need no allurement, no invitation, no sauce; I eat the meat raw, and, instead of whetting my appetite by these preparatives, they tire and pall it. Will the license of the time excuse the sacrilegious boldness of my holding the dialoguisms of Plato himself to be also heavy, and too much stifling his matter; and my lamenting so much time lost by a man who had so many better things to say, in so many long and needless preliminary interlocutions? My ignorance will better excuse me in this, that I see nothing in the beauty of his language. I would gener

and of Plato's dialogues.

ally choose books that use sciences, not such as only lead to them. The two first,[1] and Pliny, and their like, have nothing of this *Hoc age;* they will have to do with men already instructed; or if they have, 'tis a substantial *Hoc age*, and that has a body by itself. I also delight in reading the Epistles to Atticus; not only because they contain a great deal of history and the affairs of his time; but much more because I therein discover much of his own private humour; for I have a singular curiosity (as I have said elsewhere) to pry into the souls, and the natural and true judgments, of the authors with whom I converse. A man may indeed judge of their parts, but not of their manners nor of themselves, by the writings they expose upon the theatre of the world. I have a thousand times lamented the loss of the treatise that Brutus writ upon virtue; for it is best learning the theory of those who best know the practice. But seeing the thing preached, and the preacher, are different things, I would as willingly see Brutus in Plutarch as in a book of his own. I would rather choose to be certainly informed of the conference he had in his tent, with some particular friends of his, the night before a battle, than of the harangue he made the next day to his army; and of what he did in his closet and his chamber, than what he did in the public place and in the Senate. As to Cicero, I am of the common opinion that (learning excepted), he had no great natural parts. He was a good citizen, of an affable nature, as all fat, heavy men, such as he was, usually are; but given to ease, and had a mighty share of vanity and ambition. Neither do I know how to excuse him for thinking his poetry fit to be published. 'Tis no great imperfection to make ill verses; but it is an imperfection not to be able to judge how unworthy his verses were of the glory of his name. For what concerns his eloquence, that is totally out of comparison; I believe it will never be equalled. The younger Cicero, who resembled his father in nothing but in

Character of Cicero.

[1] Plutarch and Seneca.

name, whilst commanding in Asia had several strangers one day at his table, and among the rest Cestius, seated at the lower end, as men often intrude to the open tables of the great. Cicero asked one of his people who that man was? who presently told him his name. But he, as one who had his thoughts taken up with something else, and had forgot the answer made him, asking three or four times over and over again the same question, the fellow, to deliver himself from so many questions, and to make him know him by some particular circumstance: "'Tis that Cestius," said he, "of whom it was told you that he makes no great account of your father's eloquence in comparison of his own." At which Cicero, being suddenly nettled, commanded poor Cestius presently to be seized, and caused him to be very well whipped in his own presence;[1]—a very discourteous entertainer! Yet, even amongst those who, all things considered, have reputed his eloquence incomparable, there have been some, however, who have not stuck to observe some faults; as that great Brutus, his friend, for example, who said 'twas a broken and feeble eloquence; *fractam et elumbem.*[2] The orators, also, nearest to the age wherein he lived, reprehended in him the care he had of a certain long cadence in his periods, and particularly took notice of these words, *esse videatur*, which he there so oft makes use of.[3] For my part I better approve of a shorter cadence, that comes more roundly off; yet he sometimes shuffles his parts more briskly together, but 'tis very seldom. I have myself taken notice of this one passage, *Ego verò me minus diu senem esse mallem, quam esse senem antequam essem.*[4] "For my own part, I had rather be old only a short time, than be old before I really am so."

The historians, however, are my true men; for they are pleasant and easy; where immediately man in general, the knowledge of whom I hunt after, Why Montaigne was best pleased with history.

[1] Seneca, *Suasor*, viii.
[2] See the Dialogue *de Oratoribus*, c. 18.
[3] Ib. c. 28.
[4] Cicero, *De Senectute*, c. 10. See some observations on this criticism in the *Œuvres complètes de Cicéron*, vol. xxviii. p. 91.

appears more lively and entire than anywhere besides; the variety and truth of his internal qualities, in gross and piecemeal, the diversity of means by which he is united and knit, and the accidents that threaten him. Now those that write lives, by reason they insist more upon counsels than events, more upon what sallies from within than upon that which happens without, are the most proper for my reading; and, therefore, above all others, Plutarch is the man for me. I am very sorry we have not a dozen Laertiuses, or that he was not further extended, or better understood. For I am equally curious to know the lives and fortunes of the great instructors of the world, as to know the diversities of their doctrines and opinions. In this class of study, the reading of histories, a man must tumble over, without distinction, all sorts of authors, ancient and modern, vulgar and classical, there to know the things of which they variously treat. But Cæsar, in my opinion, particularly deserves to be studied, not for the knowledge of the history only, but for himself, so great an excellence and perfection he has above all the rest, though Sallust be one of the number. In truth, I read this author with somewhat more reverence and respect than is usually allowed to human writings; one while considering him in his person, by his actions and miraculous greatness, and another in the purity and inimitable polish of his language and style, wherein he not only excels all other historians, as Cicero confesses,[1] but peradventure even Cicero himself; speaking of his enemies with so much sincerity in his judgment that, the false colours with which he strives to palliate his ill cause, and the pollution of his pestilent ambition, excepted, I think there is no fault to be objected against him, saving this, that he speaks too sparingly of himself, seeing so many great things could not have been performed under his conduct, but that he himself must necessarily have had a greater share in the execution than he makes mention of.

Cæsar's Commentaries commended.

[1] *Brutus*, c 75

I love historians who are either very unsophisticated or very excellent. The former, who have nothing of their own to mix with it, and who only make it their business to make a faithful collection of all that comes to their knowledge, and faithfully to record all things without choice or prejudice, leave to us the entire judgment of discerning the truth of things. Such, for example, amongst others is honest Froissart, who has proceeded in his undertaking with so frank a plainness that, having committed an error, he is not ashamed to confess and correct it in the place where the finger has been laid, and who represents to us even the variety of rumours that were then spread abroad, and the different reports that were made to him; which is the naked and unformed matter of history, and of which every one may make his profit, according to his proportion of understanding. The more excellent sort of historians have judgment to pick out what is most worthy to be known; and, of two reports, to examine which is the most likely to be true. From the condition of princes and their humours they conclude the counsels, and attribute to them words proper for the occasion; and such have title to assume the authority of regulating our belief to what they themselves believe; but certainly this privilege belongs to very few. The middle sort of historians (of which the most part are) spoil all; they will chew our meat for us; they take upon themselves to judge of, and consequently to bias history to their own fancy; for, if the judgment partially lean to one side, a man cannot avoid wresting and writhing his narrative to that bias.[1] They undertake to choose things worthy to be known, and yet very often conceal from us such a word, such a private action, as would much better instruct us; omit, as incredible, such things as they do not understand; and others, perhaps, because they cannot express them in good French or Latin. Let them, in God's name, display their eloquence, and

Froissart.

[1] "Les faits changent de forme dans la tête de l'historien; ils se moulent sur ses intérêts; ils prennent la teinte de ses préjugés."—ROUSSEAU, *Emile*, iv.

judge according to their own fancy; but let them, withal, leave us something to judge of after them, and neither alter nor disguise, by their abridgments and selections, any thing of the substance of the matter; but deliver it to us pure and entire in all its dimensions.

For the most part, and especially in these latter ages, persons are culled out for this work from amongst the common people, upon the sole consideration of well-speaking, as if we were to learn grammar thence; and the men so chosen are in the right, being hired for no other end, and pretending to nothing but babble, not to be very solicitous of any part but that, and so, with a fine jingle of words, prepare us a pretty contexture of reports they pick up in the corners of the streets. The only good histories are those that have been written by the persons themselves who commanded in the affairs whereof they write, or who have participated in the conduct of them, or, at least, who have had the conduct of others of the same nature. Such almost are all the Greek and Roman historians; for several eye-witnesses having writ of the same subject (as happened in those times, when grandeur and learning frequently met in the same person), if there was an error it must of necessity be a very slight one, and upon a very doubtful accident. What can a man expect from a physician who will undertake to write of war; or from a mere scholar treating upon the designs of princes? If we would take notice how religious the Romans were in this, there needs but this example: Asinius Pollio found in the History of Cæsar himself some mistake occasioned either by reason he could not have his eye in all parts of his army at once, and had given credit to some particular persons, who had not delivered him a very true account; or else for not having had too perfect notice given him by his lieutenants of what they had done in his absence.[1] By which

What are the only good histories.

The mistakes that have been discovered in Cæsar's Commentaries.

[1] In Suetonius's *Life of Julius Cæsar*, sect. 56, where the reader will find Pollio's criticism more severe than in Montaigne, who, however, must have taken it from Suetonius.

we may see whether the inquisition after truth be not very delicate, when a man cannot believe the report of a battle from the knowledge of him who there commanded, nor from the soldiers who were engaged in it, unless, after the method of judicatory information, the witnesses be confronted, and the challenges received upon the proof of the least details of every point. The knowledge we have of our own private affairs is indeed still much weaker and more obscure; but that has been sufficiently handled by Bodin,[1] and according to my own sentiment.

A little to guard against the treachery and defect of my memory (a defect so extreme that it has happened to me more than once to take books again into my hand for new and unseen, which I had carefully read over a few years before, and scribbled with my notes), I have taken a custom of late to fix at the end of every book (that is, of those I never intended to read again), the time when I made an end of it, and the judgment I had made of it on the whole, to the end that that might, at least, represent to me the air and general idea I had conceived of the author in reading it. And I will here transcribe some of these annotations.

I writ this some ten years ago in my Guicciardini (in what language soever my books speak, I always speak of them in my own): "He is a diligent historiographer, and from whom, in my opinion, a man may learn the truth of the affairs of his time as exactly as from any other, or more; in the most of which he was himself also a personal actor, and in honourable command. There is no appearance that he disguised any thing, either upon the account of hatred, favour, or vanity; of which the free opinion he passes upon great men, and particularly those by whom he was advanced and employed in commands of trust and honour, as Pope Clement the Seventh, give ample testimony. As to that part which he seems to think himself the

Opinion of Guicciardini;

[1] A celebrated jurisconsult, in a work published by him in 1566, entitled *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*.

best at, namely, his digressions and discourses, he has indeed very good ones, and enriched with fine expressions; but he is too fond of them; for to leave nothing unsaid, having a subject so full, ample, and almost infinite, he degenerates into pedantry, and relishes a little of the scholastic prattle. I have also observed this in him; that of so many persons, and so many effects, so many motives and so many counsels as he judges of, he never attributes any one of them to virtue, religion, or conscience; as if all those were utterly extinct in the world. And of all the actions, how brave and fair an outward show soever they make of themselves, he always throws the cause and motive upon some vicious occasion or some prospect of profit. It is impossible to imagine but that, amongst such an infinite number of actions as he makes mention of, there must be some one produced by the way of reason. No corruption could so universally have infected men that some of them would not have escaped the contagion; which makes me suspect that his own taste was vicious; whence it might happen that he judged other men by himself."

of Philip de Comines;

In my Philip de Comines there is this written: "You will here find the language soft, delightful, and full of simplicity; the narration pure, in which the veracity of the author evidently shines; free from vanity when speaking of himself, and from affection or envy when speaking of others. His discourses and exhortations more accompanied with zeal and truth than with any exquisite self-sufficiency; and throughout authority and gravity, which speak him a man of extraction and bred up in great affairs."

of du Bellay.

Upon the Memoirs of Monsieur du Bellay,[1] I find this: "'Tis always pleasant to read things writ by those that have experienced how they ought to

[1] These *Memoirs*, published by Martin du Bellay, consist of ten books, of which the first four and last three are Martin du Bellay's, and the others his brother William de Langey's, and were taken from his fifth *Ogdoade*, from the years 1536 to 1540. They are entitled *Memoirs of Martin du Bellay, containing accounts of several things that happened in France from* 1513 *to the death of Francis I. in* 1547. This accounts for Montaigne's speaking of two lords du Bellay, after he had mentioned only Monsieur du Bellay.

be carried on; but withal it cannot be denied but there is a manifest falling off in these two lords from the freedom and liberty of writing that shines in the older historians of their class, such as the Sire de Jouinville, a domestic to St. Louis; Eginhard, chancellor to Charlemagne; and of later date in Philip de Comines. We have here rather an apology for King Francis against the Emperor Charles the Fifth than a history. I will not believe that they have falsified any thing as to matter of fact; but they make a common practice of wresting the judgment of events (very often contrary to reason) to our advantage, and of omitting every thing that is ticklish to be handled in the life of their master; witness the affairs of Messieurs de Montmorency and de Biron, which are here omitted; nay, so much as the very name of Madame d'Estampes is not here to be found. Secret actions an historian may conceal; but to pass over in silence what all the world knows, and things that have drawn after them important public consequences, is an inexcusable defect. In fine, whoever has a mind to have a perfect knowledge of King Francis, and what happened in his reign, let him seek it elsewhere, if my advice may prevail. The only profit a man can reap here is from the particular narrative of battles and other exploits of war wherein those gentlemen were personally engaged; some words and private actions of the princes of their time, and the practices and negotiations carried on by the Seigneur de Langey; where, indeed, there are everywhere things worthy to be known, and discourses above the vulgar strain."

CHAPTER XI.

OF CRUELTY.

I TAKE virtue to be distinct from, and something more noble than, those inclinations to generosity and good nature which we are born with. Well disposed and well descended souls pursue, indeed, the same methods, and represent the same face that virtue itself does; but the word virtue imports something, I know not what, more great and active than merely for a man to suffer himself, by a happy dispensation, to be gently and quietly drawn in the train of reason. He who, from a natural sweetness and facility of temper, should despise injuries received, would doubtless do a very great and a very laudable thing; but he who, provoked and nettled to the quick by an offence, should fortify himself with the arms of reason against the furious appetite of revenge, and, after a great conflict, master his own passion, would doubtless do a very great deal more. The first would do well; the latter virtuously. One action might be called goodness, and the other virtue; for methinks the very name of virtue presupposes difficulty and contention, and that it cannot be exercised without opposition. 'Tis for this reason, perhaps, that we call God good, mighty, liberal, and just; but we do not call him *virtuous*,[1] being that all his operations are natural and without endeavour. Many philosophers, not only Stoics, but Epicureans,[2] (and this distinction I borrow

Virtue better than goodness.

Virtue cannot be exercised without some difficulty.

[1] "Quoique nous appellions Dieu *bon*, nous ne l'appelons pas *vertueux*, parce qu'il n'a pas besoin d'effort pour bien faire."—ROUSSEAU, *Emile*, v.

[2] Montaigne stops here to make his excuse for thus naming the Epicureans with the Stoics, in conformity to the general opinion that the Epicureans were not so rigid in their morals as the Stoics, which is not true in the main, as he demonstrates at one view. This involved Montaigne in a long parenthesis, during which it is proper that the reader be attentive, that he may not entirely lose the thread of the argument. In some latter editions of this author it has been at-

from the common opinion, which is a wrong one, notwithstanding that subtle quip of Arcesilaus to him who reproached him, "That many persons went from his school to the Epicurean, but never from the Epicurean to his;"—"It may well be so," said he; "cocks make many capons, but capons never make cocks." For, in truth, in firmness and austerity of opinions and precepts the Epicurean sect yields in no degree to the Stoic; and a Stoic, exhibiting better faith than those disputants who, to combat Epicurus and give themselves an advantage, make him say things he never thought of, twisting his words awry, and making use of the laws of grammar to deduce another sense from his way of speaking, and another doctrine than what, they well knew, he had in his heart and manifested in his manners, tells us that he declined to become an Epicurean for this consideration, among others, that he thought their ways too high and rugged; *Et ii qui φιλήδονοι vocantur, sunt φιλόκαλοι et φιλοδίκαιοι, omnesque virtutes et colunt et retinent*);[1] of the philosophers, Stoic and Epicurean, I say, there are several who were of opinion that it is not enough to have the soul seated in a good place, of a good temper, and well disposed to virtue;—it is not enough to have our resolution and our reason fixed above all the power of fortune, but we are, moreover, to seek occasions wherein to put them to the proof. We are to covet pain, necessity, and contempt, to contend with them, and to keep the soul in breath: *Multum sibi adjicit virtus lacessita.*[2] "Virtue perfectionates herself by resisting assaults." 'Tis one of the reasons why Epaminondas, who was yet of a third sect,[3] refused the riches which fortune presented to him by very lawful means, "In order," said he, "to contend with poverty;" in the extreme of which he maintained himself to the

tempted to remedy this inconvenience by some vain and unauthorized repetition; but, without observing that Montaigne's argument is rendered somewhat feeble and obscure by these, it is a license that ought not to be taken, because he, who publishes the work of another ought to give it as the other composed it. Mr. Cotton was so puzzled with the enormous parenthesis that follows in the text that he quite left it out.

[1] Cicero, *Epist. Fam.* xv. 19.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 13.

[3] The Pythagorean. See Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 44.

last. Socrates, methinks, put himself upon a still harder trial, keeping for his exercise a termagant scolding wife, which was fighting at sharps. Metellus having, of all the Roman senators, alone attempted, by the power of virtue, to withstand the violence of Saturninus, tribune of the people at Rome, who sought forcibly to cause an unjust law to pass in favour of the commons, and by so doing having incurred the capital penalties that Saturninus had established against dissentients, entertained those who in this extremity led him to execution, with words to this effect: "That it was a thing too easy and too base to do ill, and that to do well where there was no danger was a common thing; but that to do well where there was danger was the proper office of a man of virtue."[1] These words of Metellus very clearly represent to us what I would make out, that virtue refuses facility for a companion; and that that easy, smooth, and descending way, by which the regular steps of a sweet disposition of nature are conducted, is not that of a true virtue. She requires a rough and stormy passage; she will have either outward difficulties to wrestle with, like that of Metellus, by means of which fortune delights to interrupt the speed of her career; or internal difficulties, which our inordinate appetites and imperfections introduce to disturb her.

I am come thus far at my ease; but here it comes into my head that the soul of Socrates, the most perfect that ever came to my knowledge, should, by this rule, be of very little account; for I cannot conceive in that person any the least motion of a vicious inclination; I cannot imagine there could be any difficulty or constraint in the course of his virtue; I know his reason to be so powerful and sovereign over him that she would never have suffered a vicious appetite so much as to spring in him. To a virtue so elevated as his I have nothing to oppose. Methinks I see him march, with a victorious and triumphant pace, in pomp, and at his ease, without opposition or disturbance. If virtue cannot shine bright

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Marius*.

but by the conflict of contrary appetites, shall we then say that she cannot subsist without the assistance of vice, and that it is from her that she derives her reputation and honour? What then also would become of that brave and generous Epicurean pleasure which assumes to nourish virtue tenderly in her lap, and there make it play and wanton, giving it for toys to play withal shame, fevers, poverty, death, and torments? If I presuppose that a perfect virtue manifests itself in contending, in patiently enduring pain, and undergoing the utmost extremity of the gout, without being moved in her seat; if I give her austerity and difficulty for her necessary objects, what will become of a virtue elevated to such a degree as not only to despise pain, but moreover to rejoice in it, and to be tickled with the stabs of a sharp colic, such a virtue as the Epicureans have established, and of which many of them by their actions, have given most sufficient proofs?[1] As have likewise several others, who I take to have surpassed, in effect, even the rules of their own discipline; witness the younger Cato. When I see him die, and tear his own bowels, I am not satisfied simply to believe that he had then his soul totally exempt from all troubles and fear; I cannot think that he only maintained himself in the steadiness that the stoical rules prescribed him; temperate, without emotion, and undisturbed; there was, methinks, something in the virtue of this man too sprightly and active to stop there; I believe that, without doubt, he felt a pleasure and delight in so noble an action, and was more pleased in it than in any other of his life: *Sic abiit è vitâ, ut causam moriendi nactum se esse gauderet.*[2] "He quitted life rejoicing that he had found occasion to seek death." I believe this so entirely that I question indeed whether he would have been content to have been deprived of the occasion of so brave an exploit. And if the goodness that made him embrace the public concern more than his own withheld me not, I should easily fall into an opinion that

The noble death of Cato accompanied with pleasure.

[1] Cicero, *de Finibus*, ii. 30.

[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 30

he thought himself obliged to fortune for having put his virtue upon so brave a trial, and for having favoured that thief[1] in treading under foot the ancient liberty of his country. Methinks I read in this action I know not what exultation in his soul, and an extraordinary and manly emotion of pleasure, when he looked upon the generosity and height of his enterprise :—

> Deliberatâ morte ferocior:[2]
>
> "Made more haughty by his resolution to die:"

not stimulated with any hope of glory, as the popular and effeminate judgments of some have concluded (for that consideration had been too mean and low to possess so generous, so haughty, and so unbending a heart as his), but for the very beauty of the thing in itself, which he, who had the handling of the springs, discerned more clearly and in its perfection than we are able to do. Philosophy has obliged me in determining that so brave an action had been indecently placed in any other life than that of Cato, and that it only belonged to his to end so. Therefore it was that, according to reason, he commanded his son and the senators that accompanied him, to take another course in their affairs: *Catoni, quum incredibilem natura tribuisset gravitatem, eamque ipse perpetuâ constantiâ roboravisset, semperque in proposito consilio permansisset, moriendum potius, quam tyranni vultus aspiciendus, erat.*[3] "Nature having endued Cato with a surprising inflexibility, which he himself had fortified with perpetual exercise, never having deviated from his resolutions, he chose rather to die than to see the face of the tyrant." Every death ought to hold proportion with the life before it. We do not become others for dying. I always interpret the death by the life preceding; and if any one tells me of a death strong and firm in appearance, annexed to a feeble life,

[1] *Cæsar*, who, notwithstanding his great qualities, which Montaigne set off with such lustre in the preceding chapter, is here treated as he deserves, for having committed the most heinous of all crimes. Cicero, too, calls him *perditus latro* (*Ad Attic.* vii. 18).

[2] Horace, *Od.* i. 37, 29.

[3] Cic. *de Offic.* i. 31.

I conclude it produced by some feeble cause, and suitable to the life before. The easiness then of this death, and the facility of dying, he had acquired by the vigour of his soul, shall we say that it ought to abate any thing of the lustre of his virtue? And who that has his brain never so little tinctured with the true philosophy, can be content to imagine Socrates merely free from fear and passion in the accident of his prison, fetters, and condemnation? and that will not discover in him not only stability and firmness, (which was his ordinary composure,) but moreover I know not what new satisfaction and frolic cheerfulness in his last words and actions? at the start he gave, with the pleasure of scratching his leg, when his irons were taken off, does he not discover an equal serenity and joy in his soul for being freed from past inconveniences, and at the same time to enter into the knowledge of things to come? Cato will pardon me if he please; his death, indeed, is more tragical and more taken notice of, but yet this, I know not how, finer. Aristippus said to those who were pitying him, "The gods grant me such a death." A man discerns in the souls of these two great men and their imitators (for I very much doubt whether there were ever their equals) so perfect a habit of virtue that it was turned to a complexion. It is no more a laborious virtue, nor the precepts of reason, to maintain which the soul is racked; but the very essence of their souls, its natural and ordinary condition. They have rendered it such by a long practice of philosophical precepts, having lit upon a rich and ingenuous nature. The vicious passions that spring in us can find no entrance into them. The force and vigour of their souls stifle and extinguish irregular desires so soon as they begin to move.

Virtue turned into habit in Cato and Socrates.

Now, that it is not more noble, by a high and divine resolution, to hinder the birth of temptations, and to be so formed to virtue that the very seeds of vice be rooted out, than to hinder, by main force, their progress; and having suffered one's self to be surprised with

Different degrees of virtue.

the first motions of the passions, to arm one's self, and to stand firm to oppose their progress, and overcome them; and that this second effect, itself, is not also much more noble than to be simply endowed with a facile and affable nature, of itself disaffected to debauchery and vice, I do not think can be doubted; for this third and last sort seems to render a man innocent, but not virtuous; free from doing ill, but not apt enough to do well; added, that this condition is so near neighbour to imperfection and weakness that I know not very well how to separate the confines and distinguish them; the very name of goodness, and good-nature, and innocence are, for this reason, in some sort grown into contempt. I know that several virtues, as chastity, sobriety, and temperance, may come to a man through personal defects. Firmness in danger (if firmness it must be called), the contempt of death and patience in misfortunes, may oft-times be found in men for want of well judging of such matters and not apprehending them for such as they are. Want of apprehension and sottishness do sometimes counterfeit virtuous effects; as I have often observed it happen that men have been commended for what really deserved blame. An Italian lord once said this in my presence, to the disadvantage of his own nation; that the subtlety of the Italians and the vivacity of their conceptions were so great that they foresaw the dangers and accidents that might befall them so far off that it must not be thought strange if they were often, in war, observed to provide for their safety, even before they had discovered the peril; that we French and Spaniards, who are not so cunning, went on further; and that we must be made to see and feel the danger before we could take the alarm; but the Germans and Swiss, more heavy and thick-skulled, had not the sense to look about them even then, when the blows were falling about their ears. Perhaps, he only said so for mirth's sake. And yet it is most certain that, in war, raw soldiers rush into danger with more precipitation than after they have been well beaten.

Italians subtle and quick of apprehension.

Germans and Swiss loggerheads.

Haud ignarus . . . quantum nova gloria in armis,
Et prædulce decus, primo certamine, possit.[1]

"Knowing how much the hope of glory warms
The soldier in his first essay of arms."

For this reason it is that when we judge of a particular action, we are to consider the several circumstances and the whole of the man by whom it is performed, before we give it a name.

In what consisted Montaigne's virtue.

To instance in myself; I have sometimes known my friends call that prudence in me which was merely fortune, and repute that courage and patience which was judgment and opinion; and attribute to me one title for another, sometimes to my advantage, and sometimes otherwise. As to the rest I am so far from being arrived at the first and most perfect degree of excellence, where virtue is turned into habit, that even of the second I have made no great trial. I have not been very solicitous to curb the desires by which I have been importuned. My virtue is a virtue, or rather an innocence, casual and accidental. If I had been born of a more irregular complexion, I am afraid I should have made scurvy work on't; for I never observed any great stability in my soul to resist passions, if they were never so little vehement. I have not the knack of nourishing quarrels and debates in my own bosom, and consequently owe myself no great thanks that I am free from several vices:—

Si vitiis mediocribus et mea paucis
Mendosa est natura, alioqui recta; velut si
Egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore nævos;[2]

"If of small crimes, and few, my nature be
To be accused, and from the great ones free,
Those venial faults will no more spot my soul
Than a fair body's blemished with a mole;"

I owe it rather to my fortune than my reason. She has made me to be descended of a race famous for conduct, and of a very good father; I know not whether or no he has

[1] *Æneid*, xi. 154. [2] Horace, *Sat.* i. 6, 65.

infused into me part of his humour; or whether domestic examples and the good education of my infancy have insensibly assisted in the work, or if I was otherwise born so:—

> Seu Libra, seu me Scorpius aspicit
> Formidolosus, pars violentior
> Natalis horæ, seu tyrannus
> Hesperiæ Capricornus undæ.[1]
>
> "If Libra, or dread Scorpio's sign,
> Or Capricorn with stormy rays
> Prevailed, the tyrant of the Hesperian seas."

But so it is that I have naturally a horror for most vices. The answer of Antisthenes to him who asked him which was the best apprenticeship; "To unlearn evil,"[2] seems to point at this. I have them in horror, I say, with a detestation so natural and so much my own that the same instinct and impression I brought with me from my nurse I yet retain, no temptations whatever having had the power to make me alter it; not so much as my own discourses, which, in some things, dashing out of the common road, might easily license me to actions that my natural inclination makes me hate. I will say a prodigious thing, but I will say it however; I find myself, in many things, more curbed and retained by my manners than my opinion, and my concupiscence is less debauched than by reason. Aristippus instituted opinions so bold, in favour of pleasure and riches, as made all the philosophers set at him; but, as to his manners, Dionysius, the tyrant, having presented three beautiful women before him to take his choice, he made answer that he would choose them all, and that it had happened ill to Paris in having preferred one before the other two; but having taken them home to his house, he sent them back untouched.[3] His servant finding himself overloaded upon the way, with the money he carried after him, he ordered him to pour out and throw away that which

Montaigne's opinions not so regular as his manners.

[1] Horace, *Od.* ii. 17, 17.
[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*
[3] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

troubled him.[1] And Epicurus, whose doctrines are so irreligious and effeminate, was, in his life, very laborious and devout; he wrote to a friend of his that he lived only upon biscuit and water, entreating him to send him a little cheese to lie by him against he had a mind to make a feast.[2] Can it be true, that to be a perfect good man we must be so by an occult, natural, and universal propriety, without law, reason, or example? The debauches wherein I have been engaged have not been, I thank God, of the worst sort; and I have thoroughly condemned them myself; for my judgment was never infected by them. On the contrary, I accuse them more severely in myself than in another. But that is all; for, as to the rest, I oppose too little resistance, and suffer myself to incline too much to the other side of the balance, excepting that I moderate them, and prevent them from mixing with other vices which, for the most part, will cling together if a man have not a care. I have contracted and curtailed mine to make them as single as I can :—

Nec ultra
Errorem foveo.[3]

"Nor ever beyond this my faults indulge."

For, as to the opinion of the Stoics, who say that the wise man, when he works, works by all the virtues together, though one be most apparent, according to the nature of the action; (and of this the similitude of a human body might serve them to some instance; for the action of anger cannot work but that all the humours must assist, though choler predominate;) if thence they will draw a like consequence, that when the wicked man does wickedly, he does it by all the vices together, I do not believe it to be simply so, or else I understand them not; for I, by effect, find the contrary. These are witty. unsubstantial subtilties, which philosophy sometimes insists upon. I follow some vices, but I fly others as much as a saint would do. The Peripatetics also disown

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*. [2] Id. *ib*. [3] Juvenal, viii. 164.

this indissoluble connection; and Aristotle is of opinion that a prudent and just man may be intemperate and lascivious. Socrates confessed to some who had discovered a certain inclination to vice in his physiognomy, that it was, in truth, his natural propensity, but that he had, by discipline, corrected it.[1] And such as were familiar with the philosopher Stilpo said that, being born subject to wine and women, he had, by study, rendered himself very abstinent both from the one and the other.[2]

What Montaigne's goodness consisted in.

What I have in me of good, I have, on the contrary, by the chance of my birth; and hold it not either by law, precept, or other apprenticeship. The innocence that is in me is quite simple; little vigour and no art. Amongst other vices I mortally hate cruelty, both by nature and judgment, as the extreme of all vices; and this to such a degree of tender-heartedness that I cannot see a chicken's neck pulled off without trouble, and cannot without impatience, endure the cry of a hare in my dog's teeth, though the chase be an exciting pleasure. Such as are combating sensuality willingly make use of this argument, to show that it is altogether vicious and unreasonable that, when it is at the height, it masters us to that degree that a man's reason can have no access,[3] and they allege our own experience in the act of love

> Quum jam præsagit corpus,
> Atque in eo est Venus, ut muliebria conserat arva;[4]

wherein they conceive that the pleasure doth so transport us that our reason cannot perform its office whilst we are so benumbed and ravished with delight. I know very well it may be otherwise, and that a man may sometimes, if he will, gain this point over himself to sway his soul, even in the critical moment, to think of something else; but then he must firmly incline and ply it to that bent. I know that a man may triumph

He could resist the strongest impressions of pleasure.

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 37.
[2] Cicero *de fato*, c. 5.
[3] Cicero, *de Senect.* c. 12.
[4] Lucretius, iv. 1009.

over the utmost effort of this pleasure; I have experienced it myself, and have not found Venus so imperious a goddess as many, and some more correct than I, declare. I do not consider it as a miracle, as the Queen of Navarre does, in one of the tales of her *Heptameron* (which is a pretty book of its kind), nor for a thing of extreme difficulty, to pass over whole nights, where a man has all the convenience and liberty he can desire, with a long-coveted mistress, and yet be just to his faith before given, to content himself with kisses and innocent embraces, without pressing any further. I conceive that the example of the pleasure of the chase would be more proper; wherein, though the pleasure be less, yet the ravishment and the surprise are more, by which the reason, being astonished, has not so much leisure to prepare itself for the encounter; when after a long quest the game starts up on a sudden in a place where perhaps, we least expected; which sudden motion, with the ardour of the shouts and cries of the hunters, so strike us that it would be hard, for such as are lovers of the chase, to turn their thoughts another way; and the poets make Diana triumph over the torch and shafts of Cupid:—

The pleasure of the chase, what.

> Quis non malarum, quas amor curas habet,
> Hæc inter obliviscitur? [1]
>
> "Who amongst such delights would not remove
> Out of his thoughts the anxious cares of love?"

To return to my subject. I am tenderly compassionate of other afflictions, and should readily cry for company if, upon any occasion whatever, I could cry at all. Nothing tempts my tears but tears, and not only those that are real and true, but whatever they are, feigned or real. I do not much pity the dead, and should envy them rather; but I very much pity the dying. The savages do not so much offend me in roasting and eating the bodies of the dead as they do who torment and persecute the living. Nay, I cannot so much as

[1] Horace, *Epod.* ii. 37. In the first editions of the Essays, Montaigne added, after this quotation, "What a set of odds and ends have we here: I went clear out of my way to lug in this bit of prattle about the chase."

look upon the ordinary executions of justice, how reasonable soever, with a steady eye. Some one having to give testimony of Julius Cæsar's clemency: "He was," says he, "mild and moderate in his vengeance; for, having compelled the pirates to yield, by whom he had before been taken prisoner and put to ransom, forasmuch as they had threatened him with the cross, he indeed condemned them to it, but it was after they were first strangled. He punished his secretary, Philemon, who had attempted to poison him, with no greater severity than simple death." Without naming that Latin author [1] that dares allege for a testimony of clemency the only killing those by whom we have been offended; it is easy to guess that he was struck with the horrid and inhuman examples of cruelty practised by the Roman tyrants.

Julius Cæsar's clemency.

For my part, even in justice itself, all that exceeds mere death appears to me pure cruelty; especially in us, who ought to have that regard to souls to dismiss them in a good and calm condition; which cannot be when we have discomposed them by insufferable torments. Not long since a soldier, who was a prisoner, perceiving from a tower where he was shut up that the people began to assemble in the place of execution, and that the carpenters were busy erecting a scaffold, he presently concluded that the preparation was for him; and therefore entered into a resolution to kill himself, but could find no instrument to assist him in his design, except an old rusty cart-nail, that fortune presented to him; with this he first gave himself two great wounds about his throat; but finding these would not do, he presently after gave himself a third in the belly, where he left the nail sticking up to the head. The first of his keepers that came in found him in this condition alive, but sunk down and exhausted by his wounds. Therefore, to make use of time before he should die and defeat the law, they made haste to

The executions of justice ought to be simple, and to carry no marks of severity.

[1] *Suetonius*, in the Life of Cæsar.

read his sentence, which having done, and he hearing that he was only condemned to be beheaded, he seemed to take new courage, accepted of wine, which he had before refused, and thanked his judges for the unhoped-for mildness of their sentence; saying, "That indeed he had taken a resolution to dispatch himself, for fear of a more severe and insupportable death; having entertained an opinion, by the preparations he had seen in the place, that they were resolved to torment him with some horrible execution;" and seemed to be delivered from death by having it changed from what he apprehended. I should advise that these examples of severity, by which 'tis designed to retain the people in their duty, might be exercised upon the dead bodies of criminals; for to see them deprived of sepulture, to see them boiled and divided into quarters, would almost work as much upon the vulgar as the pain they make the living endure; though that, in effect, be little or nothing, as God himself says, "Who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do."[1] And the poets represent the horror of such a sight as far above that of death itself:—

> Heu! reliquias semiassi regis, denudatis ossibus,
> Per terram sanie delibutas fœde divexarier.[2]

I happened to come by one day accidentally, at Rome, just as they were upon executing Catena, a notorious robber. He was strangled, without any emotion on the part of the spectators; but when they came to cut him in quarters, the hangman gave not a blow that was not followed by a doleful cry from the people, and an exclamation as if every one had lent his feeling to the miserable carcase. Those inhuman excesses ought to be exercised upon the bark, and not upon the quick. 'Twas thus that Artaxerxes moderated the severity of the ancient laws of Persia, ordering "That the nobility who had failed in their charge, instead of being whipped, as they used

The severe laws of Persia moderated by Artaxerxes.

[1] St. Luke, xii. 4.

[2] "Let not the blood-stained relics of the half-burnt king be dragged over the plains."—Cicero, *Tuscul.* ii. 44.

to be, should be stripped only, and their clothes whipped for them; and that, whereas they had formerly their hair torn off, they should only take off their high-crowned tiara.[1] The so devout Egyptians thought they sufficiently satisfied the divine justice in sacrificing hogs in effigy and representation;[2] a bold invention to pay God, so essential a substance, in picture only, and in show.

Hogs sacrificed in effigy to the divine justice by the Egyptians.

I live in a time wherein we abound in incredible examples of this vice, through the license of our civil wars; and we see nothing in ancient histories more extreme than what we have proof of every day. I could hardly persuade myself, before I saw it with my eyes, that there could be found out men so cruel and fell who, for the sole pleasure of murder, would hack and lop off the limbs of others; sharpen their wits to invent unusual torments and new kinds of deaths, without hatred, without profit, and for no other end but only to enjoy the pleasant spectacle of the gestures and motions, the lamentable groans and cries of a man dying in anguish. For this is the utmost point to which cruelty can arrive. *Ut homo hominem, non iratus, non timens, tantum spectaturus, occidat.*[3] "That a man should kill a man without being angry, or without fear, only for the pleasure of the spectacle." For my own part I cannot, without pain, see so much as an innocent beast pursued and killed that has no defence, and from whom we have received no offence at all. And that which frequently happens, that the stag we hunt, finding himself weak and out of breath, seeing no other remedy, surrenders himself to us who pursue him, imploring mercy by his tears,

The cruelties exercised in civil wars.

Montaigne's humanity with regard to beasts.

Questuque, cruentus,
Atque imploranti similis,[4]

"With bleeding tears doth mercy seem to crave,"

[1] Plutarch, in his *Apothegms of the ancient Kings*.

[2] Herodotus, ii. 47, says this was only done by the poorer sort, who made swine in dough, which they baked, and then offered the sacrifice.

[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 90.

[4] *Æneid*, v. 105.

has ever been to me a very melancholy sight. I hardly ever take any beast or bird alive that I do not presently turn loose. Pythagoras bought them of huntsmen and fowlers, and fishes of fishermen, to do the same:—

> Primoque a cæde ferarum
> Incaluisse puto maculatum sanguine ferrum.[1]
>
> "I think 'twas slaughter of wild beasts that made
> Too docile man first learn the killing trade."

Those natures that are sanguinary towards beasts discover a natural propensity to cruelty. After they had accustomed themselves, at Rome, to the spectacle of the slaughter of animals, they proceeded to those of the slaughter of men, of the gladiators. Nature has herself, I fear, imprinted in man a kind of instinct to inhumanity; nobody takes pleasure in seeing beasts play and caress one another, but every one is delighted with seeing them dismember and tear one another to pieces. And that I may not be laughed at for the sympathy I have with them, theology itself enjoins us some favour in their behalf; and, considering that one and the same Master has lodged us together in this palace for his service, and that they, as well as we, are of his family, it has reason to enjoin us some affection and regard to them. Pythagoras borrowed the Metempsychosis from the Egyptians, but it has since been received by several nations, and, particularly, by our druids:—

Pythagoras's doctrine of the transmutation of souls.

> Morte carent animæ; semperque, priore relictâ
> Sede, novis domibus vivunt, habitantque receptæ.[2]
>
> "Souls never die, but, having left one seat,
> Into new mansions they admittance get."

The religion of our ancient Gauls maintained that souls, being eternal, never ceased to remove and shift their places from one body to another; mixing, moreover, with this fancy some consideration of divine justice. For, according to the behaviour of the soul, whilst it had been in Alexander, they

[1] Ovid. *Met.* xv. 3, 6. [2] Ib. *id.*

said that God ordered it another body to inhabit, more or less painful, and proper for its condition :—

Muta ferarum
Cogit vincla pati: truculentos ingerit ursis,
Prædonesque lupis; fallaces vulpibus addit.
. . . . . .
Atque ubi per varios annos, per mille figuras,
Egit, Lætheo purgatos flumine, tandem
Rursus ad humanæ revocat primordia formæ: [1]

"The yoke of speechless brutes he made them wear,
Bloodthirsty souls he did inclose in bears;
Those that rapacious were in wolves he shut;
The sly and cunning he in foxes put;
Where after having in a course of years,
In num'rous forms, quite finish'd their careers,
In Lethe's flood he purged them, and at last
In human bodies he the souls replac'd:"

if it had been valiant, he lodged it in the body of a lion; if voluptuous, in that of a hog; if timorous, in that of a hart or hare; if subtle, in that of a fox; and so of the rest, till, having purified it by this chastisement, it again entered into the body of some other man;

Ipse ego, nam memini, Trojani tempore belli,
Panthoides Euphorbus eram.[2]

"For I, myself, remember, in the days
O' th' Trojan war, that I Euphorbus was."

Beasts revered as gods by some of the ancients.

As to the relation betwixt us and beasts, I do not much admit of it, nor allow what several nations, and those some of the most ancient and most noble, have practised, who have not only received brutes into their society, but have given them a rank infinitely above them; esteeming them one while familiars and favourites of the gods, and having them in more than human reverence and respect; others knowing no other God or Divinity but they. *Belluæ à Barbaris propter beneficium*

[1] Claudian, *in Rufin.* ii. 482.

[2] It is Pythagoras who speaks thus of himself, in Ovid, *Metam.* xv. 8, 8. Would you know by what means Pythagoras could remember what he had been in the time of the Trojan war? See Diogenes Laert. *in Vitâ.*

consecratæ.[1] "The Barbarians consecrated beasts out of opinion of some benefit received by them:"—

Crocodilon adorat
Pars hæc; illa pavet saturam serpentibus Ibin:
Effigies sacri hîc nitet aurea Cercopitheci,
. . . . . hîc piscem fluminis, illic
Oppida tota canem venerantur.[2]

"The serpent-eating ibis these inshrine,
Those think the crocodile alone divine;
There, in another place, you may behold
The statue of a monkey shine with gold;
Here men some monstrous fish's aid implore,
And there whole towns a grinning dog adore."

And the very interpretation that Plutarch gives to this error,[3] which is very well put, is advantageous to them; for, he says, that it was not the cat, or the ox, for example, that the Egyptians adored; but that they, in those beasts, adored some image of the divine faculties; in this patience and utility, in that vivacity, or, like our neighbours, the Burgundians, with the whole of Germany, impatience to see itself shut up; by which they represented the liberty they loved and adored above all other divine faculties, and so of the rest. But when, amongst the more moderate opinions, I meet with arguments that endeavour to demonstrate the near resemblance betwixt us and animals, how much they share in our greatest privileges, and with how great probability they compare us together, in faith, I abate a great deal of our presumption, and willingly resign the title of that imaginary sovereignty that some attribute to us over other creatures.

We ought to have some regard for the brute beasts.

But supposing all this were not so, there is, nevertheless, a certain respect, and a general duty of humanity, that ties us, not only to beasts that have life and sense, but even to trees and plants. We owe justice to men, and graciousness and benignity to other creatures that are capable of it. There is a certain natural commerce and mutual obligation betwixt them and us; neither

[1] Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* i. 36.
[2] Juv. xv. 2.
[3] In his Treatise on *Isis* and *Osiris*.

shall I be afraid to discover the tenderness of my nature so childish that I cannot well refuse to play with my dog when he, the most unseasonably, importunes me so to do. The Turks have alms and hospitals for beasts. The Romans had public care to the nourishment of geese,[1] by whose vigilancy their Capitol had been preserved. The Athenians made a decree that the mules, which served at the building of the temple, called Hecatompedon, should be free, and suffered to pasture where they would without hindrance.[2] The Agrigentines had a common custom solemnly to inter the beasts they had a kindness for; as horses of some extraordinary qualities, dogs and birds of whom they had had profit, and even those that had only been kept to divert their children; and the magnificency that was common with them in all other things did also particularly appear in the sumptuousness and number of monuments erected to this end, that remained a show for several ages after.[3] The Egyptians buried wolves, bears, crocodiles, dogs, and cats, in sacred places, embalmed their bodies, and put on mourning at their death.[4] Cimon gave an honourable sepulture to the mares with which he had three times gained the prize of the course at the Olympic games.[5] The ancient Xantippus caused his dog to be interred on an eminence near the sea, which has ever since retained the name.[6] And Plutarch says[7] that he made conscience of selling to the slaughter, for a paltry profit, an ox that had been long in his service.

[1] Cicero, *pro Rosc. Am.* c. 20. Livy, v. 47. Pliny, x. 22.
[2] Plutarch, *Life of Cato the Censor.*
[3] Diod. Sic. xiii. 77.
[4] Herod. ii. 65.
[5] Id. vi. 103. Ælian, *H. of Animals*, xii. 40.
[6] *Cynossema.* Plutarch's *Life of Cato the Censor.*
[7] Id. *ib.*

CHAPTER XII.

APOLOGY FOR RAIMOND SEBOND.[1]

LEARNING is, indeed, a very great and a very material accomplishment; and those who despise it sufficiently discover their own want of understanding; but yet I do not prize it at the excessive rate that some others do, as Herillus, the philosopher, for one, who therein places the sovereign good, and maintained "That it was only in her to render us wise and contented,"[2] which I do not believe; no more than I do what others have said, that learning is the mother of all virtue, and that all vice proceeds from ignorance, which, if it be true, requires a very long interpretation. My house has long been open to men of knowledge, and is very well known to them; for my father, who governed it fifty years and upwards, inflamed with the new ardour with which Francis the First embraced letters, and brought them into esteem, with great diligence and expense hunted after the acquaintance of learned men, receiving them into his house as persons sacred, and that had some particular inspiration of divine wisdom; collecting their sayings and sentences as so many oracles, and with so much the greater reverence and religion as he was the less able to judge of them; for he had no knowledge of letters any more than his predecessors. For my part I love them well, but I do not adore them. Amongst others, Peter Bunel,[3] a man of great reputation for knowledge in his time, having, with some

The utility of learning.

[1] Called also Sebon, Sebeyde, Sabonde, de Sebonde; born at Barcelona in the fourteenth century; died in 1432, at Toulouse, where he had lived as professor of medicine and theology. Joseph Scaliger said of this apology for Sebond: "Eo omnia faciunt, ut *magnificat à matines*."—Scalig. ii.

[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.

[3] A native of Toulouse, one of the most able Ciceronians of the sixteenth century, in the opinion of Henry Stephen; born 1499, died at Turin 1546. He was preceptor of Pibrac. See Basle, *in verbo*.

others of his sort, staid some days at Montaigne in my father's company, he presented him at his departure with a book, entitled *Theologia naturalis; sive, Liber Creaturarum, magistri Raimondi de Sebonde.*[1] And as the Italian and Spanish tongues were familiar to my father, and as this book was written in a sort of jargon of Spanish with Latin terminations, he hoped that, with a little help, he might be able to understand it, and therefore recommended it to him for a very useful book, and proper for the time wherein he gave it to him; which was when the novel doctrines of Luther began to be in vogue, and in many places to stagger our ancient belief; wherein he was very well advised, wisely, in his own reason, foreseeing that the beginning of this distemper would easily run into an execrable atheism, for the vulgar, not having the faculty of judging of things, suffering themselves to be carried away by chance and appearance, after having once been inspired with the boldness to despise and control those opinions which they had before had in extreme reverence, such as those wherein their salvation is concerned, and that some of the articles of their religion are brought into doubt and dispute, they afterwards throw all other parts of their belief into the same uncertainty, they having with them no other authority or foundation than the others they had already discomposed; and shake off all the impressions they had received from the authority of the laws, or the reverence of the ancient customs, as a tyrannical yoke:—

Sebond's work translated by Montaigne.

> Nam cupide conculcatur nimis ante metutum;[2]
>
> "For with most eagerness they spurn the law,
> By which they were before most kept in awe;"

resolving to admit nothing for the future to which they had not first interposed their own decrees, and given their particular consent.

[1] In the first edition of the Essays, and in that of 1588, it is simply called *La Théologie Naturelle de Raimond Sebond.* The original Latin work was first printed at Deventer, in 1487, and was often reprinted in France during the 16th and 17th centuries.

[2] Lucret. v. 1139.

It happened that my father, a little before his death, having accidentally found this book under a heap of other neglected papers, commanded me to translate it for him into French. It is good to translate such authors as this, where there is little but the matter itself to express; but such wherein grace of language and elegance of style are aimed at, are dangerous to attempt, especially when a man is to turn them into a weaker idiom. It was a strange and a new undertaking for me; but having by chance at that time nothing else to do, and not being able to resist the command of the best father that ever was, I did it as well as I could; and he was so well pleased with it as to order it to be printed, which after his death was done.[1] I found the ideas of this author exceeding fine, the contexture of his work well followed, and his design full of piety; and because many people take a delight to read it, and particularly the ladies, to whom we owe the most service, I have often thought to assist them to clear the book of two principal objections made to it. His design is bold and daring, for he undertakes, by human and natural reasons, to establish and make good, against the atheists, all the articles of the Christian religion; wherein, to speak the truth, he is so firm and so successful that I do not think it possible to do better upon that subject; nay, I believe he has been equalled by none. This work, seeming to me to be too beautiful and too rich for an author whose name is so little known, and of whom all that we know is that he was a Spaniard, practising physic at Toulouse about two hundred years ago; I inquired of Adrian Turnebus, who knew all things, what he thought of that book; who made answer, "That he thought it was some abstract

What books are proper to translate.

[1] "A Paris, chez Gabriel Buon," in 1569. Montaigne, in his first edition of the Essays, also states that the first edition of his translation was full of errors of the press, owing to the carelessness of the printer, who had the sole care of it. This translation was reprinted, in 1588, more correctly, Montaigne himself having purged it of the printer's errors. The best edition is that printed at Paris in 1611. There is such a perspicuity, spirit, and natural vivacity in this translation, that it has all the air of an original. Montaigne has added nothing of his own to it but a short dedication of it to his father.

drawn from St. Thomas d'Aquin; for that, in truth, his mind, so full of infinite erudition and admirable subtlety, was alone capable of such thoughts." Be this as it may, whoever was the author and inventor (and 'tis not reasonable, without greater certainty, to deprive Sebond of that title), he was a man of great judgment and most admirable parts.

The objection made to the book; and Montaigne's answer.

The first thing they reprehend in his work is "That Christians are to blame to repose their belief upon human reason, which is only conceived by faith and the particular inspiration of divine grace." In which objection there appears to be something of zeal to piety, and therefore we are to endeavour to satisfy those who put it forth with the greater mildness and respect. This were a task more proper for a man well read in divinity than for me, who know nothing of it; nevertheless, I conceive that in a thing so divine, so high, and so far transcending all human intelligence, as is that truth, with which it has pleased the bounty of God to enlighten us, it is very necessary that he should moreover lend us his assistance, as a very extraordinary favour and privilege, to conceive and imprint it in our understanding. And I do not believe that means purely human are in any sort capable of doing it; for, if they were, so many rare and excellent souls, and so abundantly furnished with natural force, in former ages, could not have failed, by their reason, to arrive at this knowledge. 'Tis faith alone that livelily and certainly comprehends the deep mysteries of our religion; but, withal, I do not say that it is not a worthy and very laudable attempt to accommodate those natural and human utensils with which God has endowed us to the service of our faith; it is not to be doubted but that it is the most noble use we can put them to; and that there is not a design in a Christian man more noble than to make it the aim and end of all his studies to extend and amplify the truth of his belief. We do not satisfy ourselves with serving God with our souls and understandings only, we moreover

owe and render him a corporal reverence, and apply our limbs and motions, and external things to do him honour; we must here do the same, and accompany our faith with all the reason we have, but always with this reservation, not to fancy that it is upon us that it depends, nor that our arguments and endeavours can arrive at so supernatural and divine a knowledge. If it enters not into us by an extraordinary infusion; if it enters not only by reason, but, moreover, by human ways, it is not in us in its true dignity and splendour; and yet, I am afraid, we only have it by this way. If we hold upon God by the mediation of a lively faith; if we hold upon God by him, and not by us; if we had a divine basis and foundation, human occasions would not have the power to shake us as they do; our fortress would not surrender to so weak a battery; the love of novelty, the constraint of princes, the success of one party, and the rash and fortuitous change of our opinions, would not have the power to stagger and alter our belief; we should not then leave it to the mercy of every new argument, nor abandon it to all the rhetoric in the world; we should withstand the fury of these waves with an immovable and unyielding constancy:—

The marvellous effects of lively faith.

> Illisos fluctus rupes ut vasta refundit,
> Et varias circum latrantes dissipat undas
> Mole suâ.[1]
>
> "As a great rock repels the rolling tides,
> That foam and bark about her marble sides,
> From its strong bulk."

If we were but touched with this ray of divinity, it would appear throughout; not only our words, but our works also, would carry its brightness and lustre; whatever proceeded from us would be seen illuminated with this noble light. We

[1] These Latin verses were written in praise of Ronsard by an anonymous modern poet, who borrowed the sentiment, and most of the words, from those lines of Virgil's,—

> Ille velut pelagi rupes immota resistit;
> Ut pelagi rupes magno veniente fragore,
> Quæ sese, multis circumlatrantibus undis,
> Mole tenet——. *Æneid*, vii. 587.

ought to be ashamed that, in all the human sects, there never was any of the faction, what difficulty and strange novelty soever his doctrine imposed upon him, that did not, in some measure, conform his life and behaviour to it, whereas so divine and heavenly an institution does only distinguish Christians by the name! Will you see the proof of this? Compare our manners to those of a Mahometan or Pagan, you will still find that we fall very short; there, where, out of regard to the reputation and advantage of our religion, we ought to shine in excellency at a vast distance beyond all others; and that it should be said of us, "Are they so just, so charitable, so good? Then they are Christians." All other signs are common to all religions; hope, trust, events, ceremonies, penance, martyrs. The peculiar mark of our truth ought to be our virtue, as it is also the most heavenly and difficult, and the most worthy product of truth. For this our good St. Louis was in the right, who, when the Tartar king, who was become Christian, designed to come to Lyons to kiss the Pope's feet, and there to be an eye-witness of the sanctity he hoped to find in our manners, immediately diverted him from his purpose; for fear lest our disorderly way of living should, on the contrary, put him out of conceit with so holy a belief.[1] And yet it happened quite otherwise since to that other, who, going to Rome, to the same end, and there seeing the dissoluteness of the prelates and people of that time, settled himself so much the more firmly in our religion, considering how great the force and divinity of it must necessarily be that could maintain its dignity and splendour among so much corruption, and in so vicious hands. If we had but one single grain of faith, we should remove mountains from their places,[2] saith the sacred Word; our actions, that would then be directed and accompanied by the divinity, would not be merely human, they would have in them something of miraculous, as well as our belief: *Brevis est institutio vitæ honestæ*

Virtue the particular mark of the Christian religion.

[1] *Mem. de Joinville*, c. 9.

[2] *St. Matthew*, xvii. 19.

beatæque, si credas.[1] "Believe, and the way to happiness and virtue is a short one." Some impose upon the world that they believe that which they do not; others, more in number, make themselves believe that they believe, not being able to penetrate into what it is to believe. We think it strange if, in the civil war which, at this time, disorders our state, we see events float and vary after a common and ordinary manner; which is because we bring nothing to it but our own. Justice, which is in one party, is only there for ornament and palliation; it is, indeed, pretended, but 'tis not there received, settled, and espoused; it is there, as in the mouth of an advocate, not as in the heart and affection of the party. God owes his extraordinary assistance to faith and religion; not to our passions. Men there are the conductors, and therein serve themselves with religion, whereas it ought to be quite contrary. Observe, if it be not by our own hands that we guide and train it, and draw it like wax into so many contrary figures, from a rule in itself so direct and firm. When and where was this more manifest than in France in our days? They who have taken it on the left hand, they who have taken it on the right; they who call it black, they who call it white, alike employ it to their violent and ambitious designs, conduct it with a progress, so conform in riot and injustice that they render the diversity they pretended in their opinions, in a thing whereon the conduct and rule of our life depends, doubtful and hard to believe. Did one ever see, come from the same school and discipline, manners more united, and more the same? Do but observe with what horrid impudence we toss divine arguments to and fro, and how irreligiously we have both rejected and retaken them, according as fortune has shifted our places in these intestine storms. This so solemn proposition, "Whether it be lawful for a subject to

God assists our faith and religion, not our passions.

Whether it be lawful to take arms against the king in defence of religion.

[1] Quintilian, xii. 11. It is hardly necessary to remark that Montaigne uses this quotation in a different sense from its author.

rebel and take up arms against his prince for the defence of his religion," do you remember in whose mouths, the last year, the affirmative of it was the prop of one party, and the negative the pillar of another? And hearken now from what quarter comes the voice and instruction of the one and the other, and if arms make less noise and rattle for this cause than for that. We condemn those to the fire who say that truth must be made to bear the yoke of our necessity; and how much worse does France than say it?[1] Let us confess the truth; whoever should draw out from the army, even that raised by the king, those who take up arms out of pure zeal to religion, and also those who only do it to protect the laws of their country, or for the service of their prince, could hardly, out of both these put together, make one complete company of gens-d'armes. Whence does this proceed, that there are so few to be found who have maintained the same will and the same progress in our civil commotions, and that we see them one while move but a foot-pace, and another run full speed? and the same men one while damage our affairs by their violent heat and fierceness, and another by their coldness, gentleness, and slowness; but that they are pushed on by particular and casual considerations, according to the variety wherein they move?

I evidently perceive that we do not willingly afford devotion any other offices but those that best suit with our own passions. There is no hostility so admirable as the Christian. Our zeal performs wonders, when it seconds our inclinations to hatred, cruelty, ambition, avarice, detraction, and rebellion; but when it moves, against the hair, towards bounty, benignity, and temperance, unless, by miracle, some rare and virtuous disposition prompts us to it, we stir neither hand nor foot. Our religion is intended to extirpate vices, whereas it screens, nourishes, and incites them. We must not mock God. If we believed in him, I do not say by faith, but with a simple

The zeal of the Christians full of injustice and fury.

[1] Bayle quotes and comments on this passage in the article *Hotman*.

belief, that is to say (and I speak it to our great shame) if we believed in him and recognized him as we do any other history, or as we would do one of our companions, we should love him above all other things for the infinite bounty and beauty that shines in him;—at least, he would go equal in our affection with riches, pleasure, glory, and our friends. The best of us is not so much afraid to outrage him as he is afraid to injure his neighbour, his kinsman, or his master. Is there any understanding so weak that, having on one side the object of one of our vicious pleasures, and on the other (in equal knowledge and persuasion) the state of an immortal glory, would change the first for the other? and yet we often renounce this out of mere contempt; for what lust tempts us to blaspheme, if not, perhaps, the very desire to offend. The philosopher Antisthenes, as he was being initiated in the mysteries of Orpheus, the priest telling him, "That those who professed themselves of that religion were certain to receive perfect and eternal felicity after death,"—"If thou believest that," answered he, "why dost thou not die thyself?"[1] Diogenes, more rudely, according to his manner, and more remote from our purpose, to the priest that in like manner preached to him, "To become of his religion, that he might obtain the happiness of the other world;"—"What!" said he, "thou wouldest have me to believe that Agesilaus and Epaminondas, who were so great men, shall be miserable, and that thou, who art but a calf, and canst do nothing to purpose, shalt be happy, because thou art a priest?"[2] Did we receive these great promises of eternal beatitude with the same reverence and respect that we do a philosophical discourse, we should not have death in so great horror:—

> Non jam se moriens dissolvi conquereretur;
> Sed magis ire foras, vestemque relinquere, ut anguis,
> Gauderet, prælonga senex aut cornua cervus.[3]

> "We should not on a deathbed grieve to be
> Dissolved, but rather launch out cheerfully

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ.* [2] Id. *ib.* [3] Lucret. iii. 612

From our old hut, and, with the snake, be glad
To cast off the corrupted slough we had;
Or with th' old stag rejoice to be now clear
From the large horns, too ponderous grown to bear."

"I desire to be dissolved," we should say, "and to be with Jesus Christ."[1] The force of Plato's arguments concerning the immortality of the soul set some of his disciples to seek a premature grave, that they might the sooner enjoy the things he had made them hope for.[2]

The foundation of the profession of the Christian religion.

All this is a most evident sign that we only receive our religion after our own fashion, by our own hands, and no otherwise than as other religions are received. Either we are happened in the country where it is in practice, or we reverence the antiquity of it, or the authority of the men who have maintained it, or fear the menaces it fulminates against misbelievers, or are allured by its promises. These considerations ought, 'tis true, to be applied to our belief, but as subsidiaries only, for they are human obligations. Another religion, other witnesses, the like promises and threats, might, by the same way, imprint a quite contrary belief. We are Christians by the same title that we are Perigordians or Germans. And what Plato says,[3] "That there are few men so obstinate in their atheism whom a pressing danger will not reduce to an acknowledgment of the divine power," does not concern a true Christian; 'tis for mortal and human religions to be received by human recommendation. What kind of faith can that be that cowardice and want of courage establish in us? A pleasant faith, that does not believe what it believes but for want of courage to disbelieve it! Can a vicious passion, such as inconstancy and astonishment, cause any regular product in our souls? "They are confident in their judgment," says he,[4] "that what is said of hell and future torments is all feigned; but an occasion of making the experi-

[1] St. Paul, *Epist. to Philipp.* i. 23.
[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 34. Callimachus, *Epig.* 24, &c.
[3] *Laws*, book x.
[4] *Republic*, i.

ment presenting itself, when old age or diseases bring them to the brink of the grave, the terror of death, by the horror of that future condition, inspires them with a new belief." And by reason that such impressions render them timorous, he forbids in his Laws [1] all such threatening doctrines, and all persuasion that any thing of ill can befall a man from the gods, excepting for his great good when they happen to him, and for a medicinal effect. They say of Bion that, infected with the atheism of Theodorus, he had long had religious men in great scorn and contempt, but that death surprising him, he gave himself up to the most extreme superstition; as if the gods withdrew and returned according to the necessities of Bion.[2] Plato and these examples would conclude that we are brought to a belief of God either by reason or by force. Atheism being a proposition as unnatural as monstrous, difficult also and hard to establish in the human understanding, how arrogant soever, there are men enough seen, out of vanity and pride, to be the authors of extraordinary and reforming opinions, and outwardly to affect the profession of them; who, if they are such fools, have, nevertheless, not the power to plant them in their own conscience. Yet will they not fail to lift up their hands towards heaven if you give them a good thrust with a sword in the breast; and when fear or sickness has abated and dulled the licentious fury of this giddy humour, they will easily reunite, and very discreetly suffer themselves to be reconciled to the public faith and examples. A doctrine seriously digested is one thing, and those superficial impressions another; which springing from the disorder of an unhinged understanding, float at random and great uncertainty in the fancy. Miserable and senseless men, who strive to be worse than they can!

What atheism is.

The error of paganism and the ignorance of our sacred truth, let this great soul of Plato, but great only in human greatness, fall also into this other mistake, "That children

[1] Book ii., and in the *Republic*, book iii. [2] Laertius, *in Vit.*

and old men were most susceptible of religion," as if it sprung and derived its credit from our weakness. The knot that ought to bind the judgment and the will, that ought to restrain the soul and join it to our creator, should be a knot that derives its foldings and strength not from our considerations, from our reasons and passions, but from a divine and supernatural constraint, having but one form, one face, and one lustre, which is the authority of God and his divine grace. Now the heart and soul being governed and commanded by faith, 'tis but reason that they should muster all our other faculties, according as they are able to perform to the service and assistance of their design. Neither is it to be imagined that all this machine has not some marks imprinted upon it by the hand of the mighty architect, and that there is not in the things of this world some image that in some measure resembles the workman who has built and formed them. He has, in his stupendous works, left the character of his divinity, and 'tis our own weakness only that hinders us from discerning it. 'Tis what he himself is pleased to tell us, "That he manifests his invisible operations to us by those that are visible." Sebond applied himself to this laudable and noble study, and demonstrates to us that there is not any part or member of the world that disclaims or derogates from its maker. It were to do wrong to the divine goodness, did not the universe consent to our belief. The heavens, the earth, the elements, our bodies and our souls,—all things concur to this; we have but to find out the way to use them; they instruct us, if we are capable of instruction. For this world is a sacred temple, into which man is introduced, there to contemplate statues, not the works of a mortal hand, but such as the divine purpose has made the objects of sense; the sun, the stars, the water, and the earth, to represent those that are intelligible to us. "The invisible things of God," says St. Paul,[1] "appear by the creation of the world, his

Divinity imprinted in the outward fabric of the world.

The world a sacred temple.

[1] *Romans*, i. 20.

eternal wisdom and divinity being considered by his works."

> Atque adeo faciem cœli non invidet orbi
> Ipse Deus, vultusque suos corpusque recludit
> Semper volvendo; seque ipsum inculcat et offert:
> Ut bene cognosci possit, doceatque videndo
> Qualis eat, doceatque suas attendere leges.[1]

> "And God himself envies not men the grace
> Of seeing and admiring heaven's face;
> But, rolling it about, he still anew
> Presents its varied splendour to our view
> And on our minds himself inculcates, so
> That we th' Almighty mover well may know:
> Instructing us, by seeing him the cause
> Of all, to reverence and obey his laws."

Now our prayers and human discourses are but as sterile and undigested matter. The grace of God is the form; 'tis that which gives fashion and value to it. As the virtuous actions of Socrates and Cato remain vain and fruitless, for not having had the love and obedience of the true creator of all things for their end and object, and for not having known God, so is it with our imaginations and discourses; they have a kind of body, but it is an inform mass, without fashion and without light, if faith and grace be not added thereto. Faith coming to tinct and illustrate Sebond's arguments renders them firm and solid; and to that degree that they are capable of serving for directions, and of being the first guides to an elementary Christian to put him into the way of this knowledge. They in some measure form him to, and render him capable of, the grace of God, by which means he afterwards completes and perfects himself in the true belief. I know a man of authority, bred up to letters, who has confessed to me to have been brought back from the errors of unbelief by Sebond's arguments. And should they be stripped of this ornament, and of the assistance and approbation of the faith, and be looked upon as mere fancies only, to contend with those who are precipitated into the dreadful and horrible

[1] Manil. iv. 907.

darkness of irreligion, they will even there find them as solid and firm as any others of the same quality that can be opposed against them; so that we shall be ready to say to our opponents:—

Si melius quid habes, arcesse; vel imperium fer:[1]

"If you have arguments more fit,
Produce them, or to these submit;"

let them admit the force of our reasons, or let them show us others, and upon some other subject, better woven and of finer thread. I am, unawares, half engaged in the second objection, to which I proposed to make answer in the behalf of Sebond. Some say that his arguments are weak, and unable to make good what he intends, and undertake with great ease to confute them. These are to be a little more roughly handled, for they are more dangerous and malicious than the first. Men willingly wrest the sayings of others to favour their own prejudicate opinions. To an atheist all writings tend to atheism; he corrupts the most innocent matter with his own venom. These have their judgments so prepossessed that they cannot relish Sebond's reasons. As to the rest, they think we give them very fair play in putting them into the liberty of combating our religion with weapons merely human, whom, in her majesty, full of authority and command, they durst not attack. The means that I shall use, and that I think most proper to subdue this frenzy, is to crush and spurn under foot pride and human arrogance; to make them sensible of the inanity, vanity, and vileness of man; to wrest the wretched arms of their reason out of their hands; to make them bow down and bite the ground under the authority and reverence of the Divine Majesty. 'Tis to that alone that knowledge and wisdom appertain; that alone that can make a true estimate of itself, and from which we purloin whatever we value our-

Answer to the charge against Sebond's book, that the arguments are weak.

Wisdom only belongs to the Divinity.

[1] Horace, *Epist.* i. 5, 6.

selves upon: Οὐ γὰρ ἐᾷ φρονέειν ὁ Θεὸς μέγα ἄλλον, ἢ ἑωϋτόν.[1] "God permits not any being but himself to be truly wise." Let us subdue this presumption, the first foundation of the tyranny of the evil spirit. *Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.*[2] "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." "Understanding is in the gods," says Plato,[3] "and not at all, or very little, in men." Now it is in the mean time a great consolation to a Christian man to see our frail and mortal parts so fitly suited to our holy and divine faith that, when we employ them to the subjects of their own mortal and frail nature they are not even there more unitedly or more firmly adjusted. Let us see, then, if man has in his power other more forcible and convincing reasons than those of Sebond; that is to say, if it be in him to arrive at any certainty by argument and reason. For St. Augustin,[4] disputing against these people, has good cause to reproach them with injustice, "In that they maintain the part of our belief to be false that our reason cannot establish." And to show that a great many things may be, and have been, of which our nature could not sound the reason and causes, he proposes to them certain known and undoubted experiments, wherein men confess they see nothing; and this he does, as all other things, with a curious and ingenious inquisition. We must do more than this, and make them know that, to convince the weakness of their reason, there is no necessity of culling out uncommon examples; and that it is so defective and so blind that there is no faculty clear enough for it; that to it the easy and the hard are all one; that all subjects equally, and nature in general, disclaim its authority and reject its mediation.

What does truth mean when she preaches to us to fly worldly philosophy,[5] when she so often inculcates to us,[6] "That our wisdom is but folly in the sight of God; that the

[1] Herod. vii. 10.
[2] *Epist. St. Peter*, v. 5.
[3] In the *Timæus*.
[4] *De Civit. Dei*, xxi. 5.
[5] St. Paul, *Epist. to the Colossians*, ii 8.
[6] Id. *Corinthians*, i. 8, 19.

The wisdom of the world folly with God.

vainest of all vanities is man; that the man who presumes upon his wisdom does not yet know what wisdom is; and that man, who is nothing, if he thinks himself to be any thing, does seduce and deceive himself?" These sentences of the Holy Spirit do so clearly and vividly express that which I would maintain that I should need no other proof against men who would with all humility and obedience submit to his authority; but these will be whipped at their own expense, and will not suffer a man to oppose their reason but by itself.

Let us then, for once, consider a man alone, without foreign assistance, armed only with his own proper arms, and unfurnished of the divine grace and wisdom, which is all his honour, strength, and the foundation of his being. Let us see how he stands in this fine equipage. Let him make me understand, by the force of his reason, upon what foundations he has built those great advantages he thinks he has over other creatures. Who has made him believe that this admirable motion of the celestial arch, the eternal light of those luminaries that roll so high over his head, the wondrous and fearful motions of that infinite ocean, should be established and continue so many ages for his service and convenience? Can any thing be imagined so ridiculous, that this miserable and wretched creature, who is not so much as master of himself, but subject to the injuries of all things, should call himself master and emperor of the world, of which he has not power to know the least part, much less to command the whole? And the privilege which he attributes to himself of being the only creature in this vast fabric who has the understanding to discover the beauty and the parts of it; the only one who can return thanks to the architect, and keep account of the revenues and disbursements of the world; who, I wonder, sealed him this patent? Let us see his commission for this great employment. Was it granted in favour of the wise only? Few people will be concerned in it. Are fools and wicked persons worthy so extraordinary a favour, and,

being the worst part of the world,[1] to be preferred before the rest? Shall we believe this man?—*Quorum igitur causâ quis dixerit effectum esse mundum? Eorum scilicet animantium, quæ ratione utuntur; hi sunt dii et homines, quibus profecto nihil est melius:* "For whose sake shall we, therefore, conclude that the world was made? For theirs who have the use of reason; these are gods and men, than whom certainly nothing can be better;" we can never sufficiently decry the impudence of this conjunction. But, wretched creature, what has he in himself worthy of such an advantage? Considering the incorruptible existence of the celestial bodies, their beauty, magnitude, and continual revolution by so exact a rule:—

Cum suspicimus magni cœlestia mundi
Templa super, stellisque micantibus æthera fixum,
Et venit in mentem lunæ solisque viarum;[2]

"When we the heavenly arch above behold,
And the vast sky adorned with stars of gold,
And mark the reg'lar courses that the sun
And moon in their alternate progress run;"

considering the dominion and influence those bodies have, not only over our lives and fortunes:—

Facta etenim et vitas hominum suspendit ab astris;[3]

"Men's lives and actions on the stars depend;"

but even over our inclinations, our thoughts and wills, which they govern, incite, and agitate at the mercy of their influences, as our reason teaches us:—

Speculataque longe
Deprendit tacitis dominantia legibus astra,
Et totum alternâ mundum ratione moveri,
Fatorumque vices certis discernere signis;[4]

"Contemplating the stars he finds that they
Rule by a secret and a silent sway;
And that the enamell'd spheres which roll above
Do ever by alternate causes move.

[1] *Balbus apud* Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* ii. 58. The original has *fata quoque.*
[2] Lucret. v. 1203.
[3] Manilus, iii. 58.
[4] Id. i. 60.

And, studying these, he also can foresee,
By certain signs, the turns of destiny;"

seeing that not only a man, not only kings, but that monarchies, empires, and all this lower world follow the influence of the celestial motions:—

Quantaque quam parvi faciant discrimina motus:
Tantum est hoc regnum, quod regibus imperat ipsis! [1]

"How great a change a little motion brings!
So great this kingdom is that governs kings:"

if our virtue, our vices, our knowledge, and this very discourse we are upon of the power of the stars, and the comparison we are making betwixt them and us, proceed, as our reason supposes, from their favour:—

Furit alter amore,
Et pontum tranare potest et vertere Trojam:
Alterius sors est scribendis legibus apta.
Ecce patrem nati perimunt, natosque parentes:
Mutuaque armati coeunt in vulnere fratres.
Non nostrum hoc bellum est; coguntur tanta movere,
Inque suas ferri pœnas, lacerandaque membra.
. . . . . .
Hoc quoque fatale est, sic ipsum expendere fatum; [2]

"One mad in love may cross the raging main,
To level lofty Ilium with the plain;
Another's fate inclines him more by far
To study laws and statutes for the bar.
Sons kill their fathers, fathers kill their sons,
And one arm'd brother 'gainst another runs.
This war's not their's, but fate's, that spurs them on
To shed the blood which, shed, they must bemoan;
And I ascribe it to the will of fate
That on this theme I now expatiate:

if we derive this little portion of reason we have from the bounty of heaven, how is it possible that reason should ever make us equal to it? How subject its essence and condition to our knowledge? Whatever we see in those bodies astonishes us; *Quæ molitio, quæ ferramenta, qui vectes, quæ*

[1] Manilus, i. 55, iv. 98. [2] Id. i. 79, 118.

machinæ, qui ministri tanti operis fuerunt?[1] "What contrivance, what tools, what materials, what engines, were employed about so stupendous a work?" Why do we deprive them of soul, of life, and discourse? Have we discovered in them any immovable or insensible stupidity, we who have no commerce with them but by obedience? Shall we say that we have discovered in no other creature but man the use of a reasonable soul? What! have we seen any thing like the sun? Does he cease to be, because we have seen nothing like him? And do his motions cease, because there are no other like them? If what we have not seen is not, our knowledge is marvellously contracted; *Quæ sunt tantæ animi angustiæ!*[2] "How narrow are our understandings!" Are they not dreams of human vanity, to make the moon a celestial earth? there to fancy mountains and vales, as Anaxagoras did? there to fix habitations and human abodes, and plant colonies for our convenience, as Plato and Plutarch have done? And of our earth to make a luminous and resplendent star? *Inter cætera mortalitatis incommoda, et hoc est, caligo mentium; nec tantum necessitas errandi, sed errorum amor.*[3] . . . *Corruptibile corpus aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem.*[4] "Amongst the other inconveniences of mortality this is one, that darkness of the understanding which leads men astray, not so much from a necessity of erring, but from a love of error. The corruptible body stupefies the soul, and the earthly habitation dulls the faculties of the imagination."

Presumption an infirmity natural to man.

Presumption is our natural and original disease. The most wretched and frail of all creatures is man, and withal the proudest. He feels and sees himself lodged here in the dirt and filth of the world, nailed and rivetted to the worst and deadest part of the universe, in the lowest story of the house, the most remote from the heavenly arch, with animals of the worst con-

[1] Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* i. 8.
[2] Cicero, *ib.* i. 31.
[3] Seneca, *de Ira*, ii. 9.
[4] *Book of Wisdom*; quoted by St. Augustine, *De Civit. Dei*, ix. 15.

dition of the three; and yet in his imagination will be placing himself above the circle of the moon, and bringing the heavens under his feet. 'Tis by the same vanity of imagination that he equals himself to God, attributes to himself divine qualities, withdraws and separates himself from the crowd of other creatures, cuts out the shares of the animals, his fellows and companions, and distributes to them portions of faculties and force, as himself thinks fit. How does he know, by the strength of his understanding, the secret and internal motions of animals?—from what comparison betwixt them and us does he conclude the stupidity he attributes to them? When I play with my cat who knows whether I do not make her more sport than she makes me? We mutually divert one another with our play. If I have my hour to begin or to refuse, she also has hers. Plato, in his picture of the golden age under Saturn,[1] reckons, among the chief advantages that a man then had, his communication with beasts, of whom, inquiring and informing himself, he knew the true qualities and differences of them all, by which he acquired a very perfect intelligence and prudence, and led his life more happily than we could do. Need we a better proof to condemn human impudence in the concern of beasts? This great author was of opinion that nature, for the most part, in the corporal form she gave them, had only regard to the use of prognostics that were derived thence in his time. The defect that hinders communication betwixt them and us, why may it not be in our part as well as theirs? 'Tis yet to determine where the fault lies that we understand not one another,—for we understand them no more than they do us; and by the same reason they may think us to be beasts as we think them. 'Tis no great wonder if we understand not them, when we do not understand a Basque or a Troglodyte [2] And yet some have boasted that they understood them, as Apollonius Tya-

By what right he claims the superiority over the animals.

[1] In his *Politics*.

[2] *Troglodyte*; one who inhabits caves of the earth —*Howell*.

næus,[1] Melampus, Tiresias, Thales, and others. And seeing, as cosmographers report, that there are nations that have a dog for their king,[2] they must of necessity be able to interpret his voice and motions. We must observe the parity betwixt us; we have some tolerable apprehension of their meaning, and so have beasts of ours,—much about the same. They caress us, threaten us, and beg of us, and we do the same to them. As to the rest, we manifestly discover that they have a full and absolute communication amongst themselves, and that they perfectly understand one another, not only those of the same, but of divers kinds:—

Communication of beasts amongst themselves.

> Et mutæ pecudes, cum denique sæcla ferarum
> Dissimiles suerunt voces variasque ciere,
> Cum metus aut dolor est, aut cum jam gaudia gliscunt.[3]
>
> "The tamer herds, and wilder sort of brutes,
> Though we of higher race conclude them mutes,
> Yet utter dissonant and various notes,
> From gentler lungs or more distended throats,
> As fear, or grief, or anger, do them move,
> Or as they do approach the joys of love."

In one kind of barking of a dog the horse knows there is anger, of another sort of bark he is not afraid. Even in the very beasts that have no voice at all, we easily conclude, from the society of offices we observe amongst them, some other sort of communication; their very motions discover it:—

> Non aliâ longè ratione atque ipse videtur
> Protrahere ad gestum pueros infantia linguæ.[4]
>
> "As infants who, for want of words, devise
> Expressive motions with their hands and eyes."

And why not, as well as our dumb people, dispute, argue, and tell stories by signs? Of whom I have seen some, by practice, so clever and active that way that, in fact, they wanted nothing of the perfection of making themselves under-

[1] Philostratus, *in Vitâ*.
[2] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vi. 30.
[3] Lucret. v. 1058.
[4] Lucretius, v. 1029.

stood. Lovers are angry, reconciled, entreat, thank, appoint, and, in short, speak all things by their eyes:—

E'l silenzio ancor suole
Haver prieghi e parole.[1]

"Even silence in a lover
Love and passion can discover."

What with the hands? We require, promise, call, dismiss, threaten, pray, supplicate, deny, refuse, interrogate, admire, number, confess, repent, fear, express confusion, doubt, instruct, command, incite, encourage, swear, testify, accuse, condemn, absolve, abuse, despise, defy, provoke, flatter, applaud, bless, submit, mock, reconcile, recommend, exalt, entertain, congratulate, complain, grieve, despair, wonder, exclaim, and what not! And all this with a variety and multiplication, even emulating speech. With the head we invite, remand, confess, deny, give the lie, welcome, honour, reverence, disdain, demand, rejoice, lament, reject, caress, rebuke, submit, huff, encourage, threaten, assure, and inquire. What with the eyebrows?—what with the shoulders? There is not a motion that does not speak, and in an intelligible language without discipline, and a public language that every one understands; whence it should follow, the variety and use distinguished from others considered, that these should rather be judged the property of human nature. I omit what necessity particularly does suddenly suggest to those who are in need;—the alphabets upon the fingers, grammars in gesture, and the sciences which are only by them exercised and expressed; and the nations that Pliny reports have no other language.[2] An ambassador of the city of Abdera, after a long conference with Agis, King of Sparta, demanded of him, "Well, sir, what answer must I return to my fellow-citzens?" "That I have given thee leave," said he, "to say what thou wouldest, and as much as thou wouldest, without ever speaking a word."[3] Is not this a silent speaking, and very easy to be understood?

[1] Tasso, *Amintas*, ii.
[2] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vi. 30.
[3] Plutarch, *Apoth. of the Laced.*

As to the rest, what is there in us that we do not see in the operations of animals? Is there a polity better ordered, the offices better distributed, and more inviolably observed and maintained, than that of bees? Can we imagine that such, and so regular, a distribution of employments can be carried on without reasoning and deliberation?

The capacity which is observed in the behaviour of the brute part of the creation.

> His quidam signis atque hæc exempla sequuti,
> Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis, et haustus
> Æthereos, dixere.'
>
> "Hence to the bee some sages have assigned
> Some portion of the god and heavenly mind."

The swallows that we see at the return of the spring, searching all the corners of our houses for the most commodious places wherein to build their nest; do they seek without judgment, and amongst a thousand choose out the most proper for their purpose, without discretion? And in that elegant and admirable contexture of their buildings, can birds rather make choice of a square figure than a round, of an obtuse than of a right angle, without knowing their properties and effects? Do they bring water, and then clay, without knowing that the hardness of the latter grows softer by being wetted? Do they mat their palace with moss or down without foreseeing that their tender young will lie more safe and easy? Do they secure themselves from the wet and rainy winds, and place their lodgings against the east, without knowing the different qualities of the winds, and considering that one is more wholesome than another? Why does the spider make her web tighter in one place, and slacker in another; why now make one sort of knot and then another, if she has not deliberation, thought, and conclusion? We sufficiently discover in most of their works how much animals excel us, and how unable our art is to imitate them. We see, nevertheless, in our rougher performances,

The superiority of nature to art, an inference which Montaigne draws from this principle in favour of the beasts against men.

[1] Virg. *Georg.* iv. 219.

that we employ all our faculties, and apply the utmost power of our souls; why do we not conclude the same of them? Why should we attribute to I know not what natural and servile inclination the works that excel all we can do by nature and art? wherein, without being aware, we give them a mighty advantage over us in making nature, with maternal gentleness and love, accompany and lead them, as it were, by the hand to all the actions and commodities of their life, whilst she leaves us to chance and fortune, and to seek out by art the things that are necessary to our conservation, at the same time denying us the means of being able, by any instruction or effort of understanding, to arrive at the natural sufficiency of beasts; so that their brutish stupidity surpasses, in all conveniences, all that our divine intelligence can do. Really, at this rate, we might with great reason call her an unjust step-mother; but it is nothing so, our polity is not so irregular and unformed.

Nature has universally cared for all her creatures, and there is not one she has not amply furnished with all means necessary for the conservation of its being. For the common complaints I hear men make (as the license of their opinions one while lifts them up above the clouds, and then again depresses them to the antipodes), that we are the only animal abandoned naked upon the bare earth, tied and bound, not having wherewithal to arm and clothe us but by the spoil of others; whereas nature has covered all other creatures either with shells, husks, bark, hair, wool, prickles, leather, down, feathers, scales, or silk, according to the necessities of their being; has armed them with talons, teeth, or horns, wherewith to assault and defend, and has herself taught them that which is most proper for them, to swim, to run, to fly, and sing, whereas man neither knows how to walk, speak, eat, or do any thing but weep, without teaching;—

> Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
> Navita, nudus humi jacet, infans, indigus omni
> Vitali auxilio, cùm primùm in luminis oras

Nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit,
Vagituque locum lugubri complet; ut æquum est,
Cui tantùm in vitâ restet transire malorum.
At variæ crescunt pecudes, armenta, feræque,
Nec crepitacula eis opus est, nec cuiquam adhibenda est
Almæ nutricis blanda atque infracta loquela;
Nec varias quærunt vestes pro tempore cœli;
Denique non armis opus est, non mœnibus altis,
Queis sua tutentur, quando omnibus omnia largè
Tellus ipsa parit, naturaque dædala rerum;[1]

"Like to the wretched mariner, when toss'd
By raging seas upon the desert coast,
The tender babe lies naked on the earth,
Of all supports of life stript by his birth;
When nature first presents him to the day,
Freed from the cell wherein before he lay,
He fills the ambient air with doleful cries,
Foretelling thus life's future miseries;
But beasts, both wild and tame, greater and less,
Do of themselves in strength and bulk increase;
They need no rattle, nor the broken chat,
By which the nurse first teaches boys to prate;
They look not out for different robes to wear,
According to the seasons of the year;
And need no arms nor walls their goods to save,
Since earth and liberal nature ever have,
And will, in all abundance, still produce
All things whereof they can have need or use:"

these complaints are false; there is in the polity of the world a greater equality and more uniform relation. Our skins are as sufficient to defend us from the injuries of the weather as theirs are; witness several nations that yet know not the use of clothes. Our ancient Gauls were but slenderly clad, any more than the Irish, our neighbours, though in so cold a climate; but we may better judge of this by ourselves; for all those parts that we are pleased to expose to the air are found very able to endure it; the face, the feet, the hands, the arms, the head, according to the various habit; if there be a tender part about us, and that would seem to be in danger from cold, it should be the stomach where the digestion is; and yet our

The skin of a man sufficient proof against weather.

[1] Lucret. v. 223.

forefathers were there always open, and our ladies, as tender and delicate as they are, go sometimes half-bare as low as the navel. Neither is the binding or swathing of infants any more necessary; and the Lacedemonian mothers brought up theirs in all liberty of motion of members, without any ligature at all.[1] Our crying is common with the greatest part of other animals, and there are but few creatures that are not observed to groan, and bemoan themselves a long time after they come into the world; forasmuch as it is a behaviour suitable to the weakness wherein they find themselves. As to the custom of eating, it is in us, as in them, natural, and without instruction;—

The swathing of infants not necessary.

> Sentit enim vim quisque suam quam possit abuti;[2]
>
> "For every one soon finds his natural force,
> Which he, or better may employ, or worse."

Who doubts but an infant, arrived to the strength of feeding himself, may make shift to find something to eat. And the earth produces and offers him wherewithal to supply his necessity, without other culture and artifice; and if not at all times, no more does she do it to beasts, witness the provision we see ants and other creatures hoard up against the dead seasons of the year. The late discovered nations, so abundantly furnished with natural meat and drink, without care, or without cookery, may give us to understand that bread is not our only food, and that, without tillage, our mother nature has provided us sufficiently of all we stand in need of; nay, it appears more fully and plentifully than she does at present, now that we have added our own industry:—

> Et tellus nitidas fruges vinetaque læta
> Sponte suâ primum mortalibus ipsa creavit;
> Ipsa dedit dulces fœtus, et pabula læta;
> Quæ nunc vix nostro grandescunt aucta labore,
> Conterimusque boves et vires agricolarum;

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*.
[2] Lucret. v. 1032.
[3] Lucret. ii. 1157.

"The earth did first spontaneously afford
Choice fruits and wines to furnish out the board;
With herbs and flow'rs unsown in verdant fields,
But scarce by art so good a harvest yields;
Though men and oxen mutually have strove,
With all their utmost force, the soil t' improve;"

the debauchery and irregularity of our appetites outstrips all the inventions we can contrive to satisfy it.

As to arms, we have more natural ones than most other animals, more various motions of limbs, and naturally and without lesson extract more service from them. Those that are trained to fight naked are seen to throw themselves into the like hazards that we do. If some beasts surpass us in this advantage, we surpass many others. And the industry of fortifying the body, and covering it by acquired means, we have by instinct and natural precept. That it is so, the elephant shows, who sharpens and whets the teeth he makes use of in war (for he has particular ones for that service, which he spares, and never employs them at all to any other use); when bulls go to fight, they toss and throw the dust about them; boars whet their tusks; and the ichneumon, when he is about to engage with the crocodile, fortifies his body, and covers and crusts it all over with close-wrought and well-tempered slime, as with a cuirass. Why shall we not say that it is also natural for us to arm ourselves with wood and iron?

The natural arms of men.

The elephant's teeth.

As to speech, it is certain that if it be not natural it is not necessary. Nevertheless, I believe that a child which had been brought up in an absolute solitude, remote from all society of men (which would be an experiment very hard to make), would have some kind of speech to express his meaning by. And 'tis not to be supposed that nature should have denied that to us which she has given to several other animals; for what is this faculty we observe in them, of complaining, rejoicing, calling to one another for succour, and inviting each other to love, which

Whether speech is natural to man.

The beasts have a language of their own.

they do with the voice, other than speech? And why should they not speak to one another? They speak to us, and we to them. In how many several sorts of ways do we speak to our dogs, and they answer us? We converse with them in another sort of language, and use other appellations, than we do with birds, hogs, oxen, horses, and alter the idiom according to the kind.

Così per entro loro schiera bruna
S' ammusa l' una con l' altra formica,
Forse a splar lor via e lor fortuna.[1]

"Thus from one swarm of ants some sally out,
To spy another's stock or mark its rout."

Risibility attributed to beasts.

Lactantius[2] seems to attribute to beasts not only speech, but laughter also. And the difference of language which is seen amongst us, according to the difference of countries, is also observed in animals of the same kind. Aristotle,[3] in proof of this, instances the various calls of partridges, according to the situation of places:—

Variæque volucres . . . .
Longè alias alio jaciunt in tempore voces . . . .
Et partim mutant cum tempestatibus una
Raucisonos cantus.[4]

"And various birds do from their warbling throats,
At various times, utter quite different notes,
And some their hoarse songs with the seasons change."

But it is yet to be known what language this child would speak; and of that what is said by guess has no great appearance. If a man will allege to me, in opposition to this opinion, that

Why those who are born deaf do not speak.

those who are naturally deaf speak not, I answer that this is not only because they could not receive the instruction of speaking by ear, but rather because the sense of hearing, of which they are deprived, relates to that of speaking, and that these hold together by a natural and inseparable tie, in such manner

[1] Dante, *Purgat.* xxvi. 34.
[2] *Instit. Divin.* iii. 10.
[3] *Hist. of Animals*, iv. 9.
[4] Lucret. v. 1077, 1080, 1082, 1088.

that what we speak we must first speak to ourselves within, and make it sound in our own ears, before we can utter it to others.

All this I have said to prove the resemblance there is in human things, and to bring us back and join us to the crowd. We are neither above nor below the rest. All that is under heaven, says the sage, runs one law and one fortune: —

> Indupedita suis fatalibus omnia vinclis.[1]
> "All things remain
> Bound and entangled in one fatal chain."

There is, indeed, some difference,—there are several orders and degrees; but it is under the aspect of one and the same nature:—

> Res . . . . quæque suo ritu procedit; et omnes
> Fœdere naturæ certo discrimina servant.[2]
> "All things by their own rights proceed, and draw
> Towards their ends, by nature's certain law."

Man must be compelled and restrained within the bounds of this polity. Miserable creature! he is not in a condition really to step over the rail. He is fettered and circumscribed, he is subjected to the same necessity that the other creatures of his rank and order are, and of a very mean condition, without any prerogative, or true and real preëminence. That which he attributes to himself, by vain fancy and opinion, has neither body nor taste. And if it be so, that he only, of all the animals, has this liberty of imagination and irregularity of thoughts, representing to him that which is, that which is not, and that he would have, the false and the true, 'tis an advantage dearly bought, and of which he has very little reason to be proud; for thence springs the principal and original fountain of all the evils that befall him, — sin, sickness, irresolution, affliction, despair. I say, then, to return to my subject, that there is no appearance to induce a man to believe that beasts should, by a natural and forced inclination, do the same

Animals free agents as well as mankind.

[1] Lucret. v. 874. [2] Id. ib. 921.

things that we do by our choice and industry. We ought from like effects to conclude like faculties, and from greater effects greater faculties; and consequently confess that the same reasoning, and the same ways by which we operate, are common with them, or that they have others that are better. Why should we imagine this natural constraint in them, who experience no such effect in ourselves? added that it is more honourable to be guided and obliged to act regularly by a natural and inevitable condition, and nearer allied to the divinity, than to act regularly by a temerarious and fortuitous liberty, and more safe to entrust the reins of our conduct in the hands of nature than our own. The vanity of our presumption makes us prefer rather to owe our sufficiency to our own exertions than to her bounty, and to enrich the other animals with natural goods, and abjure them in their favour, in order to honour and ennoble ourselves with goods acquired, very foolishly in my opinion; for I should as much value parts and virtues naturally and purely my own as those I had begged and obtained from education. It is not in our power to obtain a nobler reputation than to be favoured of God and nature.

For instance, take the fox, the people of Thrace make use of when they wish to pass over the ice of some frozen river, and turn him out before them to that purpose; when we see him lay his ear upon the bank of the river, down to the ice, to listen if from a more remote or nearer distance he can hear the noise of the waters' current, and, according as he finds by that the ice to be of a less or greater thickness, to retire or advance,[1]—have we not reason to believe thence that the same rational thoughts passed through his head that we should have upon the like occasions; and that it is a ratiocination and consequence, drawn from natural sense, that that which makes a noise runs, that which runs is not frozen, what is not frozen is liquid, and that which is liquid yields to impression? For to attribute this to a mere quickness of the

[1] Plutarch, *on the Craftiness of Animals.*

sense of hearing, without reason and consequence, is a chimæra that cannot enter into the imagination. We are to suppose the same of the many sorts of subtleties and inventions with which beasts secure themselves from, and frustrate, the enterprises we plot against them.

And if we will make an advantage even of this, that it is in our power to seize them, to employ them in our service, and to use them at our pleasure, 'tis still but the same advantage we have over one another. We have our slaves upon these terms; the Climacidæ, were they not women in Syria who, squat on all fours,[1] served for a ladder or footstool, by which the ladies mounted their coaches? And the greatest part of free persons surrender, for very trivial conveniences, their life and being into the power of another. The wives and concubines of the Thracians contended who should be chosen to be slain upon their husband's tomb.[2] Have tyrants ever failed of finding men enough vowed to their devotion? some of them moreover adding this necessity, of accompanying them in death as well as life? Whole armies have bound themselves after this manner to their captains.[3] The form of the oath in the rude school of gladiators was in these words: "We swear to suffer ourselves to be chained, burnt, wounded, and killed with the sword, and to endure all that true gladiators suffer from their master, religiously engaging both body and soul in his service:—"[4]

Men slaves to other men as well as the brutes are.

> Ure meum, si vis, flammâ caput, et pete ferro
> Corpus, et intorto verbere terga seca.[5]
>
> "Wound me with steel, or burn my head with fire,
> Or scourge my shoulders with well-twisted wire."

This was an obligation indeed, and yet there, in one year, ten thousand entered into it, to their destruction. When the Scythians interred their king they strangled upon his body the most beloved of his concu-

Obsequies of the Scythian kings

[1] Plutarch, *How to distinguish a Flatterer from a Friend.*
[2] Herod. v. 5. Pomponius Mela, ii. 2.
[3] Cæsar, *de Bell. Gall.* iii. 22
[4] Petron. *Sat.* c. 117.
[5] Tib. i. 9, 21.

bines, his cup-bearer, the master of his horse, his chamberlain, the usher of his chamber, and his cook. And upon the anniversary thereof they killed fifty horses, mounted by fifty pages, that they had impaled all up the spine of the back to the throat, and there left them fixed in triumph about his tomb.[1] The men that serve us do it cheaper, and for a less careful and favourable usage than what we treat our hawks, horses, and dogs withal. To what solicitude do we not submit for the conveniences of these? I do not think that servants of the most abject condition would willingly do that for their masters that princes think it an honour to do for their beasts. Diogenes seeing his relations solicitous to redeem him from servitude: "They are fools," said he; "'tis he that keeps and nourishes me that in reality serves me."[2] And they who entertain beasts ought rather to be said to serve them, than to be served by them. And withal in this these have something more generous, in that one lion never submitted to another lion, nor one horse to another, for want of courage. As we go to the chase of beasts, so do tigers and lions to the chase of men, and do the same execution upon one another; dogs upon hares, pikes upon tench, swallows upon grasshoppers, and sparrow-hawks upon blackbirds and larks:—

Serpente ciconia pullos
Nutrit, et inventâ per devia rura lacertâ; . . . .
Et leporem aut capream famulæ Jovis et generosæ
In saltu venantur aves.[3]

"The stork with snakes and lizards from the wood
And pathless wilds supports her callow brood,
While Jove's own eagle, bird of noble blood,
Scours the wide country for undaunted food;
Sweeps the swift hare or swifter fawn away,
And feeds her nestlings with the generous prey."

We divide the quarry, as well as the pains and labour of the chase, with our hawks and hounds. And about Amphipolis, in Thrace, the hawkers and wild falcons equally divide the

[1] Herod. iv. 71.
[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.
[3] Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.

prey in the half.[1] As also along the lake Mæotis, if the fisherman does not honestly leave the wolves an equal share of what he has caught, they presently go and tear his nets in pieces. And as we have a way of sporting that is carried on more by subtlety than force, as springing hares, and angling with line and hook, there is also the like amongst other animals. Aristotle says[2] that the cuttle-fish casts a gut out of her throat as long as a line, which she extends and draws back at pleasure; and as she perceives some little fish approach her she lets it nibble upon the end of this gut, lying herself concealed in the sand or mud, and by little and little draws it in, till the little fish is so near her that at one spring she may catch it.

The strength of man inferior to that of animals.

As to strength, there is no creature in the world exposed to so many injuries, as man. We need not a whale, an elephant, or a crocodile, nor any suchlike animals, of which one alone is sufficient to dispatch a great number of men, to do our business; lice are sufficient to vacate Sylla's dictatorship;[3] and the heart and life of a great and triumphant emperor is the breakfast of a little contemptible worm?

Beasts distinguish what may be of use to them in their maladies.

Why should we say that it is only for man, by knowledge built up by art and meditation, to distinguish the things useful for his being, and proper for the cure of his diseases, and those which are not; to know the virtues of rhubarb and polypody. When we see the goats of Candia, when wounded with an arrow, among a million of plants choose out dittany for their cure; and the tortoise, when she has eaten a viper, immediately go out to look for origanum to purge her; the dragon to rub and clear his eyes with fennel; the storks to give themselves clysters of sea-water; the elephants to draw not only out of their own bodies, and those of their companions, but out of the bodies of their masters too (witness the elephant of King

[1] Pliny, x. 8.

[2] Plutarch, *on the Craftiness of Animals.*

[3] Sylla died of the *morbus pediculosus* at the age of sixty.

Porus,[1] whom Alexander defeated), the darts and javelins thrown at them in battle, and that so dexterously that we ourselves could not do it with so little pain to the patient;—why do we not say here also that this is knowledge and reason? For to allege, to their disparagement, that 'tis by the sole instruction and dictate of nature that they know all this, is not to take from them the dignity of knowledge and reason, but with greater force to attribute it to them than to us, for the honour of so infallible a mistress. Chrysippus,[2] though in other things as scornful a judge of the condition of animals as any other philosopher whatever, considering the motions of a dog, who coming to a place where three ways met, either to hunt after his master he has lost, or in pursuit of some game that flies before him, goes snuffing first in one of the ways, and then in another, and, after having made himself sure of two, without finding the trace of what he seeks, dashes into the third without examination, is forced to confess that this reasoning is in the dog: "I have traced my master to this place; he must of necessity be gone one of these three ways; he is not gone this way nor that, he must then infallibly be gone this other;" and that assuring himself by this conclusion, he makes no use of his nose in the third way, nor ever lays it to the ground, but suffers himself to be carried on there by the force of reason. This sally, purely logical, and this use of propositions divided and conjoined, and the right enumeration of parts, is it not every whit as good that the dog knows all this of himself as well as from Trapezuntius?[3]

Animals are not incapable, however, of being instructed after our method. We teach blackbirds, ravens, pies, and parrots, to speak; and the facility wherewith we see they lend us their voices, and render both them and their breath so supple and pliant, to be

Animals capable of being instructed.

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra*.

[2] Sextus Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypothyp.* I. 14.

[3] George Trapezuntius, a learned Greek, who, flying from the East, and taking refuge in Italy in the fifteenth century, was by Pope Eugenius IV. intrusted with the direction of one of the colleges at Rome, where he greatly contributed to the revival of letters.

formed and confined within a certain number of letters and syllables, does evince that they have a reason within, which renders them so docile and willing to learn. Everybody, I believe, is glutted with the several sorts of tricks that tumblers teach their dogs; the dances, where they do not miss any one cadence of the sound they hear; the several various motions and leaps they make them perform by the command of a word. But I observe this effect with the greatest admiration, which nevertheless is very common, in the dogs that lead the blind, both in the country and in cities; I have taken notice how they stop at certain doors, where they are wont to receive alms; how they avoid the encounter of coaches and carts, even there where they have sufficient room to pass; I have seen them, by the trench of a town, forsake a plain and even path and take a worse, only to keep their masters further from the ditch;—how could a man have made this dog understand that it was his office to look to his master's safety only, and to despise his own conveniency to serve him? And how had he the knowledge that a way was wide enough for him that was not so for a blind man? Can all this be apprehended without ratiocination?

I must not omit what Plutarch says[1] he saw of a dog at Rome with the Emperor Vespasian, the father, at the theatre of Marcellus. This dog served a player, that played a farce of several parts and personages, and had therein his part. He had, amongst other things, to counterfeit himself for some time dead, by reason of a certain drug he was supposed to eat. After he had swallowed a piece of bread, which passed for the drug, he began after a while to tremble and stagger, as if he was taken giddy; at last, stretching himself out stiff, as if dead, he suffered himself to be drawn and dragged from place to place, as it was his part to do; and afterward, when he knew it to be time, he began first gently to stir, as if awaking out of a profound sleep, and lifting up his head

[1] Plutarch, *on the Craftiness of Animals*

looked about him after such a manner as astonished all the spectators.

The oxen that served in the royal gardens of Susa, to water them, and turn certain great wheels to draw water for that purpose, to which buckets were fastened (such as there are many in Languedoc), being ordered every one to draw a hundred turns a day, they were so accustomed to this number that it was impossible by any force to make them draw one turn more; but, their task being performed, they would suddenly stop and stand still.[1] We are almost men before we can count a hundred, and have lately discovered nations that have no knowledge of numbers at all.

There is more understanding required in the teaching of others than in being taught. Now, setting aside what Democritus held[2] and proved, "That most of the arts we have were taught us by other animals," as by the spider to weave and sew; by the swallow to build; by the swan and nightingale music; and by several animals to make medicines: Aristotle is of opinion[3] "That the nightingales teach their young ones to sing, and spend a great deal of time and care in it;" whence it happens that those we bring up in cages, and which have not had the time to learn of their parents, want much of the grace of their singing; we may judge by this that they improve by discipline and study; and, even amongst the wild, it is not all and every one alike—every one has learnt to do better or worse, according to their capacity. And so jealous are they one of another, whilst learning, that they contend with emulation, and by so vigorous a contention that sometimes the vanquished fall dead upon the place, the breath rather failing than the voice. The younger ruminate pensively and begin to mutter some broken notes; the disciple listens to the master's lesson, and gives the best account he is able; they are silent by turns; one may hear faults corrected and observe some reprehensions of the teacher.

[1] Plutarch, *on the Craftiness of Animals.*

[2] Id. *ib.*

[3] Id. *ib.*

"I have formerly seen," says Arrian,[1] "an elephant having a cymbal hung at each leg, and another fastened to his trunk, at the sound of which all the others danced round about him, rising and bending at certain cadences, as they were guided by the instrument; and 'twas delightful to hear this harmony." In the spectacles of Rome there were ordinarily seen elephants taught to move and dance to the sound of the voice, dances wherein were several changes and cadences very hard to learn. And some have been known so intent upon their lesson as privately to practise it by themselves, that they might not be chidden nor beaten by their masters.

Elephants wearing cymbals.

Elephants taught to dance.

But this other story of the pie, of which we have Plutarch himself for a warrant,[2] is very strange. She lived in a barber's shop at Rome, and did wonders in imitating with her voice whatever she heard. It happened one day that certain trumpeters stood a good while sounding before the shop. After that, and all the next day, the pie was pensive, dumb, and melancholic; which everybody wondered at, and thought the noise of the trumpets had so stupefied and astonished her that her voice was gone with her hearing. But they found at last that it was a profound meditation and a retiring into herself, her thoughts exercising and preparing her voice to imitate the sound of those trumpets, so that the first voice she uttered was perfectly to imitate their strains, stops, and changes; having by this new lesson quitted and taken in disdain all she had learned before.

The story of a magpie at Rome.

I will not omit this other example of a dog, also, which the same Plutarch (I am sadly confounding all order, but I do not propose arrangement here any more than elsewhere throughout my book) which Plutarch says he saw on board a ship. This dog being puzzled how to get the oil that was in the bottom of a jar, which he could not reach with his tongue by reason of

The cunning of a dog to get the oil out of a jar.

[1] *Hist. Indic.* c. 14.

[2] Plutarch, *on the Craftiness of Animals*; whence also the five following instances are taken.

the narrow mouth of the vessel, went and fetched stones and let them fall into the jar till he made the oil rise so high that he could reach it. What is this but an effect of a very subtle capacity? 'Tis said that the ravens of Barbary do the same, when the water they would drink is too low. This action is somewhat akin to what Juba, a king of their nation, relates of the elephants: "That when, by the craft of the hunter, one of them is trapped in certain deep pits prepared for them and covered over with brush to deceive them, all the rest, in great diligence, bring a great many stones and logs of wood to raise the bottom so that he may get out." But this animal, in several other effects, comes so near to human capacity that, should I particularly relate all that experience hath delivered to us, I should easily have what I usually maintain granted; namely, that there is more difference betwixt such and such a man than betwixt such a beast and such a man. The keeper of an elephant in a private house of Syria robbed him every meal of the half of his allowance. One day his master would himself feed him, and poured the full measure of barley he had ordered for his allowance into his manger; at which the elephant, casting an angry look at his keeper, with his trunk separated the one half from the other, and thrust it aside, by that declaring the wrong was done him. And another, having a keeper that mixed stones with his corn to make up the measure, came to the pot where he was boiling meat for his own dinner, and filled it with ashes. These are particular effects; but that which all the world has seen, and all the world knows, that in all the armies of the Levant one of the greatest force consisted in elephants, with whom they did, without comparison, much greater execution than we now do with our artillery; which takes, pretty nearly, their place in a day of battle (as may easily be supposed by such as are well read in ancient history);

The subtlety of elephants to disengage one another.

An elephant discovers the cheat of his keeper.

Si quidem Tyrio servire solebant
Annibali, et nostris ducibus, regique Molosso,

Horum Majores, et dorso ferre cohortes,
Partem aliquam belli, et euntem in prælia turrim: [1]

"The sires of these huge animals were wont
The Carthaginian Hannibal to mount;
Our leaders also did these beasts bestride,
And mounted thus Pyrrhus his foes defied;
Nay, more, upon their backs they used to bear
Castles with armed cohorts to the war."

They must necessarily have very confidently relied upon the fidelity and understanding of these beasts when they intrusted them with the vanguard of a battle, where the least stop they should have made, by reason of the bulk and heaviness of their bodies, and the least fright that should have made them face about upon their own people, had been enough to spoil all; and there are but few examples where it has happened that they have fallen foul upon their own troops, whereas we ourselves break into our own battalions and rout one another. They had the charge not of one simple movement only, but of many several things to be performed in the battle; as the Spaniards did to their dogs in their new conquest of the Indies,[2] to whom they gave pay and allowed them a share in the spoil; and those animals showed as much dexterity and judgment in pursuing the victory and stopping the pursuit; in charging and retiring, as occasion required; and in distinguishing their friends from their enemies, as they did ardour and fierceness.

We more admire and value things that are unusual and strange than those of ordinary observation. I had not else so long insisted upon these examples; for I believe whoever shall strictly observe what we ordinarily see in those animals we have amongst us may there find as wonderful effects as those we seek in remote countries and ages. 'Tis one and the same nature that rolls on her course, and whoever has sufficiently considered the present state of things, might certainly conclude as to both the future and the past. I have

[1] Juvenal, xii. 107.

[2] Some of the ancient nations did the same. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 40. Ælian, *Var. Hist.* xiv. 46.

formerly seen men, brought hither by sea from very distant countries, whose language not being understood by us, and moreover their mien, countenance, and habit, being quite differing from ours; which of us did not repute them savages and brutes? Who did not attribute it to stupidity and want of common sense to see them mute, ignorant of the French tongue, ignorant of our salutations and cringes, our port and behaviour, from which all human nature must by all means take its pattern and example. All that seems strange to us, and that we do not understand, we condemn. The same thing happens also in the judgments we make of beasts. They have several conditions like to ours; from those we may, by comparison, draw some conjecture; but by those qualities that are particular to themselves, what know we what to make of them? The horses, dogs, oxen, sheep, birds, and most of the animals that live amongst us, know our voices, and suffer themselves to be governed by them; so did Crassus's lamprey,[1] and came when he called it; as also do the eels that are found in the Lake Arethusa; and I have seen several ponds where the fishes come to eat at a certain call of those who use to feed them.

Nomen habent, et ad magistri
Vocem quisque sui venit citatus:[2]

"They every one have names, and one and all
Straightway appear at their own master's call:"

we may judge of that. We may also say that the elephants have some participation of religion,[3] forasmuch as after several washings and purifications they are observed to lift up their trunk like arms, and, fixing their eyes towards the rising of the sun, continue long in meditation and contemplation, at certain hours of the days, of their own motion, without instruction or precept. But because we do not see any such signs in other animals, we cannot for that conclude that they are without religion,

Whether elephants have any sentiments of religion.

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra*.
[2] Martial. iv. 29, 6.
[3] Pliny, viii. 1.

nor make any judgment of what is concealed from us. As we discern something in this action which the philosopher Cleanthes took notice of,[1] because it something resembles our own. He saw, he says, "Ants go from their ant-hill, carrying the dead body of an ant towards another ant-hill, whence several other ants came out to meet them, as if to speak with them; where, after having been awhile together, the last returned to consult, you may suppose, with their fellow-citizens, and so made two or three journeys, by reason of the difficulty of capitulation. In the conclusion, the last comers brought the first a worm out of their burrow, as it were for the ransom of the defunct, which the first laid upon their backs and carried home, leaving the dead body to the others." This was the interpretation that Cleanthes gave of this transaction, giving us by that to understand that those creatures that have no voice are not, nevertheless, without intercourse and mutual communication, whereof 'tis through our own defect that we do not participate; and for that reason foolishly take upon us to pass our censure. But they yet produce other effects far beyond our capacity, to which we are so far from being able to arrive by imitation that we cannot so much as by imitation conceive it. Many are of opinion that in the great and last naval engagement that Antony lost to Augustus, his admiral galley was stayed in the middle of her course by the little fish the Latins call *remora*, by reason of the property she has of staying all sorts of vessels to which she fastens herself.[2] And the Emperor Caligula, sailing with a great navy upon the coast of Romania, his galley only was suddenly stayed by the same fish, which he caused to be taken, fastened as it was to the keel of his ship, very angry that such a little animal could resist both the sea, the wind, and the force of all his oars, by being only fastened by the beak to his galley (for it is a shell-fish); and was moreover, not without great reason, astonished that, being brought to him in the vessel, it

Remarkable instance of a sort of conference betwixt ants.

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra*.

[2] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxii. 1.

had no longer the strength it had without.[1] A citizen of Cyzicus formerly acquired the reputation of a good mathematician for having learnt the quality of the hedgehog; he has his burrow open in divers places, and to several winds, and, foreseeing the wind that is to come, stops the hole on that side, which that citizen observing, gave the city certain predictions of the wind which was presently to blow.[2] The cameleon takes her colour from the place upon which she is laid;[3] but the polypus gives himself what colour he pleases, according to occasion, either to conceal himself from what he fears, or from what he has a design to seize; in the cameleon 'tis a passive, but in the polypus 'tis an active, change. We have some changes of colour, as in fear, anger, shame, and other passions, that alter our complexions; but it is by the effect of suffering, as with the cameleon. It is in the power of the jaundice, indeed, to make us turn yellow, but 'tis not in the power of our own will. Now these effects that we discover in other animals, much greater than ours, seem to imply some more excellent faculty in them unknown to us; as 'tis to be presumed there are several other qualities and abilities of theirs, of which no appearances have arrived at us.

Change of colour in the cameleon and polypus.

Amongst all the predictions of elder times, the most ancient and the most certain were those taken from the flight of birds;[4] we have nothing like it, nor any thing to be so much admired. That rule and order of the moving of the wing, whence they derived the consequences of future things, must of necessity be guided by some excellent means to so noble an operation; for to attribute this great effect to any natural disposition, without the intelligence, consent, and meditation of him by whom it is produced, is an opinion evidently false. That it is so, the cramp-fish[5] has this quality, not only to benumb all

The flight of birds the most certain way of prediction.

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxii. 32.
[2] Plutarch, *ut supra.*
[3] Id. *ib.*
[4] Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrh. Hypoth.* 14.
[5] Or *Torpedo.* Montaigne observes Mr. Coste) would mislead us here, or, rather, is misled himself; for, because the cramp-fish benumbs the members of those who touch it, and because the cranes,

the members that touch her, but even through the nets transmit a heavy dulness into the hands of those that move and handle them; nay, it is further said that if one pour water upon her, he will feel this numbness mount up the water to the hand, and stupefy the feeling through the water. This is a miraculous force; but 'tis not useless to the cramp-fish; she knows it, and makes use on't; for, to catch the prey she desires, she will bury herself in the mud, that other fishes swimming over her, struck and benumbed with this coldness of hers, may fall into her power. Cranes, swallows, and other birds of passage, by shifting their abode according to the seasons, sufficiently manifest the knowledge they have of their divining faculty, and put it in use. Huntsmen assure us that to cull out from amongst a great many puppies that which ought to be preserved as the best, the best way is to refer the choice to the mother; as thus, take them and carry them out of the kennel, and the first she brings back will certainly be the best; or if you make a show as if you would environ the kennel with fire, that one she first catches up to save. By which it appears they have a sort of prognostic which we have not; or that they have some virtue in judging of their whelps other and more certain than we have.

The manner of coming into the world, of engendering, nourishing, acting, moving, living and dying of beasts, is so near to ours that whatever we retrench from their moving

swallows, and the other birds of passage change their climate according to the seasons of the year, it by no means follows that the predictions, pretended to be derived from the flight of birds, are founded on certain faculties which those birds have of discovering things future to such as take the pains to watch their various motions. The vivacity of our author's genius has made him, in this place, confound things together that are very different. For the properties of the cramp-fish, cranes, and swallows, appear from sensible effects; but the predictions said to be derived from the flight of certain birds, by virtue of the rule and method of the motion of their wings, are only founded upon human imaginations, the reality whereof was never proved; which have varied according to times and places, and which, at length, have lost all credit with the very people that were most possessed with them; but I am of opinion that Montaigne only makes use here of the divining faculty of the birds, to puzzle those dogmatists who decide so positively that the animals have neither reason nor intellect. In this he has imitated Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hypoth.* i. 14, who, attacking the dogmatists on this very article, says, expressly—"That it cannot be denied that the birds have the use of speech, and more penetration than we have; because, not only by their knowledge of the present, but also of things future, they discover the latter, to such as are capable of understanding them, by their voice and several other means."

causes, and add to our own condition above theirs, can by no means proceed from any meditation of our own reason. For the regimen of our health, physicians propose to us the example of the beasts' manners and way of living; for this saying (out of Plutarch) has in all times been in the mouth of these people: "Keep warm thy feet and head, as to the rest, live like a beast."

The chief of all natural actions is generation; we have a certain disposition of members which is the most proper for us to that end; nevertheless, we are ordered by Lucretius to conform to the gesture and posture of the brutes as the most effectual:—

> More ferarum,
> Quadrupedumque magis ritu, plerumque putantur
> Concipere uxores: Quia sic loca sumere possunt,
> Pectoribus positis, sublatis semina lumbis; [1]

and the same authority condemns, as hurtful, those indiscreet and impudent motions which the women have added of their own invention, to whom it proposes the more temperate and modest pattern and practice of the beasts of their own sex:—

> Nam mulier prohibet se concipere atque repugnat,
> Clunibus ipsa viri Venerem si læta retractet,
> Atque exossato ciet omni pectore fluctus.
> Ejicit enim sulci recta regione viaque
> Vomerem, atque locis avertit seminis ictum.[2]

If it be justice to render to every one their due, the beasts that serve, love, and defend their benefactors, and that pursue and fall upon strangers and those who offend them, do in this represent a certain air of our justice; as also in observing a very equitable equality in the distribution of what they have to their young. And as to friendship, they have it without comparison more lively and constant than men have. King Lysimachus's dog, Hyrcanus, his master being dead, lay on his bed, obstinately refusing either to eat or drink; and, the day that

The love of dogs to their masters.

[1] Lucretius, iv. 1258. The meaning of the passage is rendered in the preceding sentence of the text.

[2] Id. *ib.* 1263. The meaning of this quotation, also, is conveyed by the paragraph which precedes it.

his body was burnt, he took a run and leaped into the fire, where he was consumed.[1] As also did the dog of one Pyrrhus, for he would not stir from off his master's bed from the time he died; and when they carried him away let himself be carried with him, and at last leaped into the pile where they burnt his master's body."[2] There are inclinations of affection which sometimes spring in us, without the consultation of reason; and by a fortuitous temerity, which others call sympathy; of which beasts are as capable as we. We see horses take such an acquaintance with one another that we have much ado to make them eat or travel, when separated; we observe them to fancy a particular colour in those of their own kind, and, where they meet it, run to it with great joy and demonstrations of good will, and have a dislike and hatred for some other colour. Animals have choice, as well as we, in their amours, and cull out their mistresses; neither are they exempt from our jealousies and implacable malice.

Desires are either natural and necessary, as to eat and drink; or natural and not necessary, as the coupling with females; or neither natural nor necessary; of which last sort are almost all the desires of men; they are all superfluous and artificial. For 'tis marvellous how little will satisfy nature, how little she has left us to desire; our ragouts and kickshaws are not of her ordering. The Stoics say that a man may live on an olive a day. The delicacy of our wines is no part of her instruction, nor the refinements we introduce into the indulgence of our amorous appetites:—

Neque illa
Magno prognatum deposcit consule cunnum.[3]

"Nature, in her pursuit of love, disclaims
The pride of titles, and the pomp of names."

These irregular desires, that the ignorance of good and a false opinion have infused into us, are so many that they almost exclude all the natural; just as if there were so great

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra* [2] Id. *ib.* [3] Horace, l. 2, 69

a number of strangers in the city as to thrust out the natural inhabitants, or, usurping upon their ancient rights and privileges, should extinguish their authority and introduce new laws and customs of their own. Animals are much more regular than we, and keep themselves with greater moderation within the limits nature has prescribed; but yet not so exactly that they have not sometimes an analogy with our debauches. And as there have been furious desires that have impelled men to the love of beasts, so there have been examples of beasts that have fallen in love with us, and been seized with monstrous affection betwixt kinds; witness the elephant who was rival to Aristophanes the grammarian in the love of a young herb-wench in the city of Alexandria, who was nothing behind him in all the offices of a very passionate suitor; for going through the market where they sold fruit, he would take some in his trunk and carry them to her. He would as much as possible keep her always in his sight, and would sometimes put his trunk under her handkerchief into her bosom, to feel her breasts.[1] They tell also of a dragon in love with a girl, and of a goose enamoured of a child; of a ram that was suitor to the minstrelless Glaucia, in the town of Asopus;[2] and we see not unfrequently baboons furiously in love with women. We see also certain male animals that are fond of the males of their own kind. Oppian[3] and others give us some examples of the reverence that beasts have to their kindred in their copulations;[4] but experience often shows us the contrary:—

Animals more regular than we.

Nec habetur turpe juvencæ
Ferre patrem tergo; fit equo sua filia conjux;
Quasque creavit, init pecudes caper; ipsaque cujus
Semine concepta est, ex illo concipit ales.[5]

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra*.
[2] Id. *ib.*
[3] *On Hunting*, i. 236.
[4] Of this there is a very remarkable instance in *Varro de Re Rustica*, xi. 7: "As incredible as it may seem, it ought to be remembered that a stallion, refusing absolutely to leap his mother, the groom thought fit to carry him to her with a cloth over his head, which blinded him, and by that means he forced him to cover her; but, taking off the veil as soon as he got off her, the stallion furiously rushed upon the groom, and bit him till he killed him."
[5] Ovid, *Metam.* x. 325.

"The heifer thinks it not a shame to take
Her lusty sire upon her willing back:
The horse his daughter leaps, goats scruple not
T' increase the herd by those they have begot;
And birds of all sorts do in common live,
And by the seed they have conceived conceive."

And for subtle cunning, can there be a more pregnant example than in the philosopher Thales's mule?[1] who, fording a river, laden with salt, and by accident stumbling there, so that the sacks he carried were all wet, perceiving that by the melting of the salt his burden was something lighter, he never failed, so oft as he came to any river, to lie down with his load; till his master, discovering the knavery, ordered that he should be laden with wood; wherein, finding himself mistaken, he ceased to practise that device. There are several that very vividly represent the true image of our avarice; for we see them infinitely solicitous to get all they can, and hide it with exceeding great care, though they never make any use of it at all. As to thrift, they surpass us not only in the foresight and laying up, and saving for the time to come, but they have, moreover, a great deal of the science necessary thereto. The ants bring abroad into the sun their grain and seed to air, refresh and dry them when they perceive them to mould and grow musty, lest they should decay and rot. But the caution and prevention they use in gnawing their grains of wheat surpass all imagination of human prudence; for by reason that the wheat does not always continue sound and dry, but grows soft, thaws and dissolves as if it were steeped in milk, whilst hasting to germination; for fear lest it should shoot and lose the nature and property of a magazine for their subsistence, they nibble off the end by which it should shoot and sprout.

Animals that seem tainted with avarice, and others that are very saving.

As to what concerns war, which is the greatest and most magnificent of human actions, I would very fain know whether we would use it for an argument of some preroga-

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra*.

The passion for war a proof of weakness in human beings, is in certain animals

tive, or, on the contrary, for a testimony of our weakness and imperfection; as, in truth, the science of undoing and killing one another, and of ruining and destroying our own kind, has nothing in it so tempting as to make it be coveted by beasts who have it not.

Quando leoni
Fortior eripuit vitam leo? quo nemore unquam
Expiravit aper majoris dentibus apri? [1]

"No lion drinks a weaker lion's gore,
No boar expires beneath a stronger boar."

Wars betwixt bees.

Yet are they not universally exempt; witness the furious encounters of bees, and the enterprises of the princes of the contrary armies:—

Sæpe duobus
Regibus incessit magno discordia motu;
Continuoque animos vulgi et trepidantia bello
Corda licet longè præsciscere.[2]

"But if contending factions arm the hive,
When rival kings in doubtful battle strive,
Tumultuous crowds the dread event prepare,
And palpitating hearts that beat to war."

I never read this divine description but that, methinks, I there see human folly and vanity represented in their true and lively colours. For these warlike movements, that so ravish us with their astounding noise and horror, this rattle of guns, drums, and cries,

Fulgur ibi ad cœlum se tollit, totaque circum
Ære renidescit tellus, subterque virûm vi
Excitur pedibus sonitus, clamoreque montes
Icti rejectant voces ad sidera mundi; [3]

"When burnish'd arms to heaven dart their rays,
And many a steely beam i' th' sunlight plays,
When trampled is the earth by horse and man,
Until the very centre groans again,
And that the rocks, struck by the various cries,
Reverberate the sound unto the skies;"

[1] Juvenal, xv. 160.
[2] Virgil, *Georg.* iv. 67.
[3] Lucret. ii. 325.

in the dreadful embattling of so many thousands of armed men, and so great fury, ardour, and courage, 'tis pleasant to consider by what idle occasions they are excited, and by how light ones appeased :—

Paridis propter narratur amorem
Greciæ Barbariæ diro collisa duello:[1]

"Of wanton Paris the illicit love
Did Greece and Troy to ten years' warfare move:"

all Asia was ruined and destroyed for the lust of Paris; the envy of one single man, a despite, a pleasure, a domestic jealousy, causes that ought not to set two oyster-wenches by the ears, is the mover of all this mighty bustle. Shall we believe those very men who are themselves the principal authors of these mischiefs? Let us then hear the greatest, the most powerful, the most victorious emperor that ever was, turning into a jest, very pleasantly and ingeniously, several battles fought both by sea and land, the blood and lives of five hundred thousand men that followed his fortune, and the strength and riches of two parts of the world drained for the expense of his expeditions :—

Quod futuit Glaphyran Antonius, hanc mihi pœnam
Fulvia constituit, se quoque uti futuam.
Fulviam ego ut futuam! quid, si me Manius oret
Pœdicem, faciam? Non puto, si sapiam.
Aut futue, aut pugnemus, ait. Quid, si mihi vitâ
Charior est ipsâ mentula? Signa canant.[2]

[1] Horace, *Epist.* i. 2. 6.

[2] This epigram was composed by Augustus, but the luscious Latin conveys such gross and licentious ideas that there would be no excuse for translating the lines without softening them. The following French version, by M. de Fontenelle, in one of his incomparable Dialogues of the Dead, though the language is so very polished, lets us entirely into Augustus's meaning :—

Parce qu' Antoine est charmé de Glaphyre
Fulvie à ses beaux yeux me veut assujettir.
Antoine est infidèle. Eh bien donc? Est-ce à dire
Que des fautes d'Antoine on me fera pâtir?
Qui? moi, que je serve Fulvie!
Suffit-il quelle en ait envie?
A ce compte, on verrait se retirer vers moi
Mille épouses mal satisfaites.
Aime-moi, me dit elle, *ou combattons.*
Mais quoi?
Elle est bien laide! Allons, sonnez trompettes.

"'Cause Anthony is fired with Glaphire's charms
Fain would his Fulvia tempt me to her arms.
If Anthony be false, what then? must I
Be slave to Fulvia's lustful tyranny?
Then would a thousand wanton, waspish wives,

(I use my Latin with the liberty of conscience you are pleased to allow me.[1]) Now this great body, with so many fronts, and so many motions, which seems to threaten heaven and earth :—

> Quam multi Lybico volvuntur marmore fluctus,
> Sævus ubi Orion hibernis conditur undis,
> Vel quam sole novo densæ torrentur Aristæ,
> Aut Hermi campo, aut Lyciæ flaventibus arvis;
> Scuta sonant, pulsuque pedum tremit excita tellus:[2]
>
> "Not thicker billows beat the Lybian main,
> When pale Orion sits in wintry rain;
> Nor thicker harvests on rich Hermus rise,
> Or Lycian fields, when Phœbus burns the skies,
> Than stand these troops: their bucklers ring around;
> Their trampling turns the turf and shakes the solid ground:"

this furious monster, with so many heads and arms, is yet man—feeble, calamitous, and miserable man! 'Tis but an ant-hill disturbed and provoked :—

> It nigrum campis agmen:[3]
>
> "The black troop marches to the field:"

a contrary blast, the croaking of a flight of ravens, the stumble of a horse, the casual passage of an eagle, a dream, a voice, a sign, a morning mist, are any one of them sufficient to beat down and overturn him. Dart but a sunbeam in his face, he is melted and vanished. Blow but a little dust in his eyes, as our poet says of the bees, and all our ensigns and legions, with the great Pompey himself at the head of them, are routed and crushed to pieces; for it was he, as I take it, that Sertorious beat in Spain with those fine arms, which also served Eumenes against Antigonus, and Surena against Crassus :—

Swarm to my bed like bees into their hives.
Declare for love, or war, she said; and frown'd:
No love I'll grant: to arms bid trumpets sound."

[1] This chapter is believed to have been addressed to Margaret de Valois, Queen of Navarre, authoress of the *Heptameron*.

[2] *Æneid*, vii. 718.

[3] *Ib.* iv. 404.

[4] Here Montaigne's memory really fails him; for it was not against Pompey that Sertorius employed this stratagem, but against the Garacitanians, a people of Spain, who dwelt in deep caverns, hollowed out of the rock, whence 'twas impossible to force them. Plutarch, *Life of Sertorius*, c. 6.

Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescent.[1]

"Yet at thy will these dreadful conflicts cease,
Throw but a little dust and all is peace."

Let us but slip our flies after them, and they will have the force and courage to defeat them. Of fresh memory, the Portuguese having besieged the city of Tamly, in the territory of Xiatine, the inhabitants of the place brought a great many hives, of which are great plenty in that place, upon the wall; and with fire drove the bees so furiously upon the enemy that they gave over the enterprise, not being able to stand their attacks and endure their stings; and so the citizens, by this new sort of relief, gained liberty and the victory with so wonderful a fortune, that at the return of their defenders from the battle they found they had not lost so much as one. The souls of emperors and cobblers are cast in the same mould; the weight and importance of the actions of princes considered, we persuade ourselves that they must be produced by some as weighty and important causes; but we are deceived; for they are pushed on, and pulled back in their motions, by the same springs that we are in our little undertakings. The same reason that makes us wrangle with a neighbour causes a war betwixt princes; the same reason that makes us whip a lackey, falling into the hands of a king makes him ruin a whole province. They are as lightly moved as we, but they are able to do more. In a gnat and an elephant the passion is the same.

The siege of Tamly raised by the bees.

As to fidelity, there is no animal in the world so treacherous as man. Our histories have recorded the violent pursuits that dogs have made after the murderers of their masters. King Pyrrhus observing a dog that watched a dead man's body, and understanding that he had for three days together performed that office, commanded that the body should be buried, and took

Dogs revenge the death of their masters.

[1] Virg. *Georg.* iv. 86.

the dog along with him. One day, as he was at a general muster of his army, this dog, seeing his master's murderers, with great barking and extreme signs of anger flew upon them, and by this first accusation awakened the revenge of this murder, which was soon after perfected by form of justice.[1] As much was done by the dog of the wise Hesiod, who convicted the sons of Ganictor of Naupactus of the murder committed on the person of his master.[2] Another dog being to guard a temple at Athens, having spied a sacrilegious thief carrying away the finest jewels, fell to barking at him with all his force, but the warders not awaking at the noise, he followed him, and day being broke, kept off at a little distance, without losing sight of him; if he offered him any thing to eat he would not take it, but would wag his tail at all the passengers he met, and took whatever they gave him; and if the thief laid down to sleep, he likewise stayed upon the same place. The news of this dog being come to the warders of the temple they put themselves upon the pursuit, inquiring of the colour of the dog, and at last found him in the city of Cromyon, and the thief also, whom they brought back to Athens, where he got his reward; and the judges, in consideration of this good office, ordered a certain measure of corn for the dog's daily sustenance, at the public charge, and the priests to take care of it. Plutarch delivers this story for a certain truth, and that it happened in the age wherein he lived.[3]

The fidelity of a dog in pursuing a sacrilegious person.

As to gratitude (for I think we need bring this word into a little repute), this one example, which Apion[4] reports himself to have been an eye-witness of, shall suffice. "One day," says he, "at Rome, they entertained the people with the sight of the fighting of several strange beasts, and principally of lions of an unusual

The gratitude of a lion towards a slave.

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra*.
[2] Id. *ib.* Pausanias, ix. 31.
[3] Plutarch, *ut supra*. Ælian, *de Animal*, vii. 13.
[4] In Aulus Gellius, v. 14. Seneca, *de Benef.* ii. 19, seems to refer to the same story. Some editors of Aulus Gellius, name the hero *Androclus*, or *Androcles*, after Ælian, *Var. Hist.* vii. 48; but the old editions have the name *Androdus*.

size; there was one amongst the rest who, by his furious deportment, by the strength and largeness of his limbs, and by his loud and dreadful roaring, attracted the eyes of all the spectators. Amongst other slaves that were presented to the people in this combat of beasts there was one Androdus, of Dacia, belonging to a Roman lord of consular dignity. This lion having seen him at a distance first made a sudden stop, as it were in a wondering posture, and then softly approached nearer in a gentle and peaceable manner, as if it were to enter into acquaintance with him. This being done, and being now assured of what he sought for, he began to wag his tail, as dogs do when they flatter their masters, and to kiss and lick the hands and thighs of the poor wretch, who was beside himself, and almost dead with fear. Androdus being by this kindness of the lion a little come to himself, and having taken so much heart as to consider and know him, it was a singular pleasure to see the joy and caresses that passed betwixt them. At which the people breaking into loud acclamations of joy, the emperor caused the slave to be called, to know from him the cause of so strange an event; who thereupon told him a new and a very strange story: "My master," said he, "being pro-consul in Africa, I was constrained, by his severity and cruel usage, being daily beaten, to steal from him and run away; and, to hide myself secretly from a person of so great authority in the province, I thought it my best way to fly to the solitudes, sands, and uninhabitable parts of that country, resolving that in case the means of supporting life should chance to fail me, to make some shift or other to kill myself. The sun being excessively hot at noon, and the heat intolerable, I lit upon a private and almost inaccessible cave, and went into it. Soon after there came in to me this lion, with one foot wounded and bloody, complaining and groaning with the pain he endured. At his coming I was exceeding afraid; but he having spied me hid in the corner of his den, came gently to me, holding out and showing me his wounded foot, as if he demanded my assistance in

his distress. I then drew out a great splinter he had got there, and, growing a little more familiar with him, squeezing the wound thrust out the matter, dirt, and gravel which was got into it, and wiped and cleansed it the best I could. He, finding himself something better, and much eased of his pain, laid him down to rest, and presently fell asleep with his foot in my hand. From that time forward he and I lived together in this cave three whole years upon one and the same diet; for of the beasts that he killed in hunting he always brought me the best pieces, which I roasted in the sun for want of fire, and so ate it. At last, growing weary of this wild and brutish life, the lion being one day gone abroad to hunt for our ordinary provision, I departed thence, and the third day after was taken by the soldiers, who brought me from Africa to this city to my master, who presently condemned me to die, and to be thus exposed to the wild beasts. Now, by what I see, this lion was also taken soon after, who has now sought to recompense me for the benefit and cure that he received at my hands." This is the story that Androdus told the emperor, which he also conveyed from hand to hand to the people; wherefore, at the general request, he was absolved from his sentence and set at liberty, and the lion was, by order of the people, presented to him. "We afterwards saw," says Apion, "Androdus leading this lion, in nothing but a small leash, from tavern to tavern at Rome, and receiving what money every body would give him, the lion being so gentle as to suffer himself to be covered with the flowers that the people threw upon him, every one that met him saying, 'There goes the lion that entertained the man; there goes the man that cured the lion.'"

Weeping of beasts for the loss of those they love.

We often lament the loss of beasts we love, and so do they the loss of us:—

> Post, bellator equus, positis insignibus, Æthon
> It lacrymans, guttisque humectat grandibus ora.[1]

[1] *Æneid*, ii. 89. Pliny, viii. 42

"To close the pomp, Æthon, the steed of state,
Is led, the fun'ral of his lord to wait.
Stripped of his trappings, with a sullen pace
He walks, and the big tears run rolling down his face."

As some nations have their wives in common, and some others have every one his own, is not the same seen among beasts, and marriages better kept than ours? As to the society and confederation they make amongst themselves, to league together and to give one another mutual assistance, is it not known that oxen, hogs, and other animals, at the cry of any of their kind that we offend, all the herd run to his aid and embody for his defence? The fish Scarus, when he has swallowed the angler's hook, his fellows all crowd about him and gnaw the line in pieces; and if, by chance, one be got into the bow net, the others present him their tails on the outside, which he holding fast with his teeth, they after that manner disengage and draw him out.[1] Society amongst beasts.

Mullets, when one of their companions is engaged, cross the line over their back, and, with a fin they have there, indented like a saw, cut and saw it asunder.[2] As to the particular offices that we receive from one another for the service of life, there are several like examples amongst them. 'Tis said that the whale never moves that she has not always before her a little fish like the sea-gudgeon, for this reason called the guide-fish, whom the whale follows, suffering himself to be led and turned with as great facility as the rudder guides the ship; in recompense of which service also, whereas all the other things, whether beast or vessel, that enter into the dreadful gulf of this monster's mouth, are immediately lost and swallowed up, this little fish retires into it in great security, and there sleeps, during which time the whale never stirs; but so soon as ever it goes out he immediately follows it; and if by accident he loses the sight of his little guide, he goes wandering here and there, and strikes

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra*. [2] Id. *ib.*

his sides against the rocks like a ship that has lost her helm; which Plutarch affirms to have seen in the island of Anticyra.[1] There is a like society betwixt the little bird called the wren and the crocodile. The wren serves for a sentinel over this great animal; and if the ichneumon, his mortal enemy, approach to fight him, this little bird, for fear lest he should surprise him asleep, both with his voice and bill rouses him and gives him notice of his danger. He feeds of this monster's leavings, who receives him familiarly into his mouth, suffering him to peck in his jaws and betwixt his teeth, and thence to pick out the bits of flesh that remain; and when he has a mind to shut his mouth, he first gives the bird warning to go out by closing it by little and little, and without bruising or doing it any harm at all.[2] The shell-fish called the naker, lives in the same intelligence with the shrimp, a little sort of animal of the lobster kind, which serves him in the nature of a porter, sitting at the opening of the shell, which the naker keeps always gaping and open till the shrimp sees some little fish, proper for their prey, within the hollow of the shell, where she enters too, and pinches the naker so to the quick that she is forced to close her shell, where they two together devour the prey they have trapped in their fort.[3] In the manner of living of the tunnies we observe a singular knowledge of the three parts of mathematics. As to astrology, they teach it men, for they stay in the place where they are surprised by the brumal solstice, and never stir thence till the next equinox; for which reason Aristotle himself attributes to them this science. As to geometry and arithmetic, they always form their numbers in the figure of a cube, every way square, and make up the body of a battalion, solid, close, and environed round with six equal sides, and swim in this square order, as large behind as before; so that whoever in seeing them can count one rank may easily number the whole troop, by reason that

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra*.
[2] Id. *ib.* Pliny, viii. 25, &c.
[3] Id. *ib.* Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* ii. 48

the depth is equal to the breadth, and the breadth to the length.[1]

As to magnanimity, it will be hard to exhibit a better instance of it than in the example of the great dog sent to Alexander the Great from the Indies. They first brought him a stag to encounter, next a boar, and after that a bear, all which he slighted, and disdained to stir from his place; but when he saw a lion he then immediately roused himself, evidently manifesting that he declared that alone worthy to enter the lists with him.[2] Touching repentance and the acknowledgment of faults, 'tis reported of an elephant that, having in the impetuosity of his rage killed his keeper, he fell into so extreme a sorrow that he would never after eat, but starved himself to death.[3] And as to clemency, 'tis said of a tiger, the most cruel of all beasts, that a kid having been put in to him, he suffered a two days' hunger rather than hurt it, and the third broke the grate he was shut up in, to seek elsewhere for prey; so unwilling he was to fall upon the kid, his familiar and his guest.[4] And as to the laws of familiarity and agreement, formed by conversation, it ordinarily happens that we bring up cats, dogs, and hares, tame together.

Magnanimity of an Indian dog.

Repentance of an elephant.

But that which seamen by experience know, and particularly in the Sicilian Sea, of the quality of the halcyons, surpasses all human thought. Of what kind of animal has nature even so much honoured the birth? The poets indeed say that one only island, Delos, which was before a floating island, was fixed for the service of Latona's lying-in; but God has ordered that the whole ocean should be stayed, made stable and smooth, without waves, without winds or rain, whilst the halcyon produces her young, which is just about the solstice, the shortest day of the year; so that by her privilege we

Marvellous condition of the halcyons.

1 Plutarch, *ut supra*. — Aristotle, *on Animals*, viii. 13. — Ælian, *on Animals*, ix. 42.

2 Plutarch, *ut supra*.

3 Arrian, *Indian History*, c. 14.

4 Plutarch, *ut supra*.

have seven days and seven nights in the very heart of winter wherein we may sail without danger. Their females never have to do with any other male but their own, whom they serve and assist all their lives, without ever forsaking him. If he becomes weak and broken with age, they take him upon their shoulders and carry him from place to place, and serve him till death. But the most inquisitive into the secrets of nature could never yet arrive at the knowledge of the wonderful fabric wherewith the halcyon builds her nest for her little ones, nor guess at the materials. Plutarch,[1] who has seen and handled many of them, thinks it is the bones of some fish which she joins and binds together, interlacing them, some lengthwise and others across, and adding ribs and hoops in such manner that she forms at last a round vessel fit to launch; which being done, and the building finished, she carries it to the beach, where the sea beating gently against it shows where she is to mend what is not well jointed and knit, and where better to fortify the seams that are leaky, that open at the beating of the waves; and, on the contrary, what is well built and has had the due finishing, the beating of the waves does so close and bind together that it is not to be broken or cracked by blows either of stone or iron without very much ado. And that which is more to be admired is the proportion and figure of the cavity within, which is composed and proportioned after such a manner as not to receive or admit any other thing than the bird that built it; for to any thing else it is so impenetrable, close, and shut, nothing can enter, not so much as the water of the sea. This is a very clear description of this building, and borrowed from a very good hand; and yet methinks it does not give us sufficient light into the difficulty of this architecture. Now from what vanity can it proceed to despise and look down upon, and disdainfully to interpret, effects that we can neither imitate nor comprehend?

The structure of their nests.

To pursue a little further this equality and correspondence

[1] Plutarch, *ut supra*.—Ælian, *Hist. of Animals*, ix. 17.—Pliny, x. 32.

betwixt us and beasts, the privilege our soul so much glorifies herself upon, of bringing all things she conceives to her own law, of stripping all things that come to her of their mortal and corporeal qualities, of ordering and placing things she conceives worthy her taking notice of, stripping and divesting them of their corruptible qualities, and making them to lay aside length, breadth, depth, weight, colour, smell, roughness, smoothness, hardness, softness, and all sensible accidents, as mean and superfluous vestments, to accommodate them to her own immortal and spiritual condition; as Rome and Paris, for example, that I have in my fancy, Paris that I imagine, I imagine and comprehend it without greatness and without place, without stone, without plaster, and without wood; this very same privilege, I say, seems evidently to be in beasts; for a courser accustomed to trumpets, to musket-shots, and battles, whom we see start and tremble in his sleep and stretched upon his litter, as if he were in a fight; it is almost certain that he conceives in his soul the beat of a drum without noise, and an army without arms and without body:—

The faculty of imagination common to the beasts as well as human beings.

> Quippe videbis equos fortes, cum membra jacebunt
> In somnis, sudare tamen, spirareque sæpe,
> Et quasi de palmâ summas contendere vires:[1]
>
> "You shall see maneg'd horses in their sleep
> Sweat, snort, start, tremble, and a clutter keep.
> As if with all their force they striving were
> The victor's palm proudly away to bear:"

the hare, that a greyhound imagines in his sleep, after which we see him pant so whilst he sleeps, stretch out his tail, shake his legs, and perfectly represents all the motions of a course, is a hare without fur and without bones:—

> Venantûmque canes in molli sæpe quiete
> Jactant crura tamen subito, vocesque repente
> Mittunt, et crebras reducunt naribus auras,
> Ut vestigia si teneant inventa ferarum:
> Expergefactique sequuntur inania sæpe

[1] Lucret. iv. 984.

Cervorum simulacra, fugæ quasi dedita cernant;
Donec discussis redeant erroribus ad se:[1]

"And hounds stir often in their quiet rest,
Spending their mouths, as if upon a quest,
Snuff, and breathe quick and short, as if they went
In a full chase upon a burning scent:
Nay, being wak'd, imagin'd stags pursue,
As if they had them in their real view,
Till, having shook themselves more broad awake,
They do at last discover the mistake:"

the watch-dogs, that we often observe to snarl in their dreams, and afterwards bark out, and start up as if they perceived some stranger at hand; the stranger that their soul discerns is a man spiritual and imperceptible, without dimension, without colour, and without being:—

Consueta domi catulorum blanda propago
Degere, sæpe levem ex oculis volucremque soporem
Discutere, et corpus de terrâ corripere instant,
Proinde quasi ignotas facies atque ora tuantur.[2]

"The fawning whelps of household curs will rise,
And, shaking the soft slumber from their eyes,
Oft bark and stare at ev'ry one within,
As upon faces they had never seen."

What constitutes beauty.

As to the beauty of the body, before I proceed any further I should know whether or no we are agreed about the description. 'Tis likely we do not well know what beauty is in nature and in general, since to our own human beauty we give so many divers forms, of which, were there any natural rule and prescription, we should know it in common, as the heat of the fire. But we fancy the forms according to our own appetite and liking:—

Turpis Romano Belgicus ore color:[3]

"A German hue ill suits a Roman face."

Beauty of the Indians.

The Indians paint it black and tawny, with great swelled lips, wide flat noses, and load the cartilage betwixt the nostrils with great rings of gold, to

[1] Lucret. iv. 992. [2] Id. iv. 999. [3] Propert. ii. 17, 26.

make it hang down to the mouth; as also the under lip with great hoops, enriched with precious stones, that weigh them down to fall upon the chin, it being with them a singular grace to show their teeth, even below the roots. In Peru the greatest ears are the most beautiful, which they stretch out as far as they can by art. And a man now living says that he has seen in an eastern nation this care of enlarging them in so great repute, and the ear loaded with so ponderous jewels, that he did with great ease put his arm, sleeve and all, through the hole of an ear. There are elsewhere nations that take great care to black their teeth, and hate to see them white, whilst others paint them red. The women are reputed more beautiful, not only in Biscay, but elsewhere, for having their heads shaved; and, which is more, in certain frozen countries, as Pliny reports.[1] The Mexicans esteem a low forehead a great beauty, and though they shave all other parts, they nourish hair on the forehead and increase it by art, and have great breasts in so great reputation that they affect to give their children suck over their shoulders. We should paint deformity so. The Italians fashion it gross and massy; the Spaniards gaunt and slender; and amongst us one has it white, another brown; one soft and delicate, another strong and vigorous; one will have his mistress soft and gentle, others haughty and majestic. Just as the preference in beauty that Plato attributes to the spherical figure the Epicureans gave rather to the pyramidal or square, and cannot swallow a god in the form of a bowl.[2] But, be it how it will, nature has no more privileged us in this from her common laws than in the rest. And if we will judge ourselves aright, we shall find that, if there be some animals less favoured in this than we, there are others, and in greater number, that are more; *a multis animalibus decore vincimur*.[3] "Many animals surpass us in beauty," even among the terrestrial, our compatriots; for as to those of sea, setting the

White teeth despised.

Men are not privileged, in point of beauty, above the beasts.

[1] *Nat. Hist.* vi. 13. [2] Plato, *Timæus*. [3] Seneca, *Epist.* 124.

figure aside, which cannot fall into any manner of proportion, being so much another thing in colour, clearness, smoothness, and arrangement, we sufficiently give place to them; and no less, in all qualities, to the aërial. And this prerogative that the poets make such a mighty matter of, our erect stature, looking towards heaven our original,

> Pronaque cùm spectent animalia cætera terram,
> Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
> Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus,[1]
>
> "Whilst all the brutal creatures downward bend
> Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,
> He set man's face aloft, that, with his eyes
> Uplifted, he might view the starry skies,"

is truly poetical; for there are several little beasts who have their sight absolutely turned towards heaven; and I find the gesture of camels and ostriches much higher raised and more erect than ours. What animals have not their faces above and not before, and do not look opposite, as we do; and that do not in their natural posture discover as much of heaven and earth as man? And what qualities of our bodily constitution, in Plato and Cicero,[2] may not indifferently serve a thousand sorts of beasts? Those that most resemble us are the most despicable and deformed of all the herd; for those, as to outward appearance and form of visage, are baboons:—

> Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis?[3]
>
> "How like to man, in visage and in shape,
> Is, of all beasts the most uncouth, the ape?"

as to the internal and vital parts, the hog. In earnest, when I consider man stark naked, even in that sex which seems to have the greatest share of beauty, his defects, natural subjection, and imperfections, I find that we have more reason than any other animal to cover ourselves; and are to be excused from borrowing of those to whom nature has in this been kinder than to us, to trick ourselves out with their beauties, and hide our-

Man has more reason to be covered than any other animal.

[1] Ovid. *Metam.* i. 84.
[2] By Plato in his *Timæus;* and by Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* ii. c. 54.
[3] Ennius, *apud* Cicero, *ut supra*, i. c. 35.

selves under their spoils, their wool, feathers, hair, and silk. Let us observe, as to the rest, that man is the sole animal whose nudities offend his own companions, and the only one who in his natural actions withdraws and hides himself from his own kind. And really 'tis also an effect worth consideration, that they who are masters in the trade prescribe, as a remedy for amorous passions, the full and free view of the body a man desires; for that to cool the ardour there needs no more but freely and fully to see what he loves:—

> Ille quod obscænas in aperto corpore partes
> Viderat, in cursu qui fuit, hæsit amor.[1]
>
> "The love that's tilting when those parts appear
> Open to view, flags in the hot career,"

And, although this receipt may peradventure proceed from a nice and cold humour, it is notwithstanding a very great sign of our deficiencies that use and acquaintance should make us disgust one another. It is not modesty, so much as cunning and prudence, that makes our ladies so circumspect to refuse us admittance into their cabinets before they are painted and tricked up for the public view:—

> Nec Veneres nostras hoc fallit; quo magis ipsæ
> Omnia summopere hos vitæ postscenia celant,
> Quos retinere volunt, adstrictoque esse in amore:[2]
>
> "Of this our ladies are full well aware,
> Which make them, with such privacy and care,
> Behind the scene all those defects remove,
> Likely to check the flame of those they love,"

whereas, in several animals there is nothing that we do not love, and that does not please our senses; so that from their very excrements we do not only extract wherewith to heighten our sauces, but also our richest ornaments and perfumes. This discourse reflects upon none but the ordinary sort of women, and is not so sacrilegious as to comprehend those divine, supernatural, and extraordinary beauties, which we see shine occasionally among us like stars under a corporeal and terrestrial veil.

[1] Ovid. *de Remed. Amor.* 249. [2] Lucretius, iv. 119.

As to the rest, the very share that we allow to beasts of the bounty of nature, by our own confession, is very much to their advantage. We attribute to ourselves imaginary and fantastic good, future and absent good, for which human capacity cannot of herself be responsible; or good, that we falsely attribute to ourselves by the license of opinion, as reason, knowledge, and honour, and leave to them for their dividend, essential, durable, and palpable good, as peace, repose, security, innocence, and health; health, I say, the fairest and richest present that nature can make us. Insomuch that philosophy, even the Stoic,[1] is so bold as to say, "That Heraclitus and Pherecides, could they have trucked their wisdom for health, and have delivered themselves, the one of his dropsy, and the other of the lousy disease that tormented him, they had done well." By which they set a greater value upon wisdom, comparing and putting it into the balance with health, than they do with this other proposition, which is also theirs; they say that if Circe had presented Ulysses with the two potions, the one to make a fool become a wise man, and the other to make a wise man become a fool, that Ulysses ought rather to have chosen the last, than consent to that by which Circe changed his human figure into that of a beast; and say that wisdom itself would have spoke to him after this manner: "Forsake me, let me alone, rather than lodge me under the body and figure of an ass." How! the philosophers then will abandon this great and divine wisdom for this corporeal and terrestrial covering? It is then no more by reason, by discourse, and by the soul, that we excel beasts; 'tis by our beauty, our fair complexion, and our fine symmetry of parts, for which we must quit our intelligence, our prudence, and all the rest. Well, I accept this open and free confession; certainly they knew that those parts, upon which we so much value ourselves, are no other than vain fancy. If beasts then

Health the best and richest gift of nature.

Wherein consists the superior excellence of man to the beasts.

[1] Plutarch, *On the common Opinions against the Stoics.*

had all the virtue, knowledge, wisdom, and stoical perfection, they would still be beasts, and would not be comparable to man, miserable, wicked, mad, man. For, in short, whatever is not as we are is nothing worth; and God, to procure himself an esteem among us, must put himself into that shape, as we shall show anon. By which it appears that it is not upon any true ground of reason, but by a foolish pride and vain opinion, that we prefer ourselves before other animals, and separate ourselves from their society and condition.

But to return to what I was upon before; we have for our part inconstancy, irresolution, incertitude, sorrow, superstition, solicitude of things to come, even after we shall be no more, ambition, avarice, jealousy, envy, irregular, frantic, and untamed appetites, war, lying, disloyalty, detraction, and curiosity. Doubtless, we have strangely overpaid this fine reason, upon which we so much glorify ourselves, and this capacity of judging and knowing, if we have bought it at the price of this infinite number of passions to which we are eternally subject. Unless we shall also think fit, as even Socrates does,[1] to add to the counterpoise that notable prerogative above beasts, "That whereas nature has prescribed them certain seasons and limits for the delights of Venus, she has given us the reins at all hours and all seasons." *Ut vinum ægrotis, quia prodest rarò, nocet sæpissimè, melius est non adhibere omnino, quam, spe dubiæ salutis, in apertam perniciem incurrere; sic, haud scio an melius fuerit humano generi motum istum celerem cogitationis, acumen, solertiam, quam rationem vocamus, quoniam pestifera sint multis, admodum paucis salutaria, non dari omnino, quam tam munificè et tam largè dari.*[2] "As it falls out that wine often hurting the sick, and very rarely doing them good, it is better not to give them any at all than to run into an apparent danger out of hope of an uncertain benefit, so I know not whether it had not been better for mankind that this quick motion, this penetration, this subtlety that we call

[1] Xenophon, *On Socrates*, i. 4, 12. [2] Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* iii. 27.

reason, had not been given to man at all; considering how pestiferous it is to many, and useful but to few, than to have been conferred in so abundant manner, and with so liberal a hand." Of what advantage can we conceive the knowledge of so many things was to Varro and Aristotle? Did it exempt them from human inconveniences? Were they by it freed from the accidents that lay heavy upon the shoulders of a porter? Did they extract from their logic any consolation for the gout? Or, for knowing how this humour is lodged in the joints, did they feel it the less? Did they enter into composition with death by knowing that some nations rejoice at his approach; or with cuckoldry, by knowing that in some parts of the world wives are in common? On the contrary, having been reputed the greatest men for knowledge, the one amongst the Romans and the other amongst the Greeks, and in a time when learning did most flourish, we have not heard, nevertheless, that they had any particular excellence in their lives; nay, the Greek had enough to do to clear himself from some notable blemishes in his. Have we observed that pleasure and health have a better relish with him that understands astrology and grammar than with others?

Illiterati num minus nervi rigent?[1]

"Th' illiterate ploughman is as fit
For Venus' service as the wit:"

or shame and poverty less troublesome to the first than to the last?

Scilicet et morbis et debilitate carebis,
Et luctum et curam effugies, et tempora vitæ
Longa tibi post hæc fato meliore dabuntur.[2]

"Disease thy couch shall flee,
And sorrow and care; yes, thou, be sure, wilt see
Long years of happiness, till now unknown."

I have known in my time a hundred artisans, a hundred labourers, wiser and more happy than the rectors of the

[1] Horace, *Epod.* 8, 17. [2] Juv. *Sat.* 14, 156.

university, and whom I had much rather have resembled. Learning, methinks, has its place amongst the necessary things of life, as glory, nobility, dignity, or at the most, as beauty, riches, and such other qualities, which indeed are useful to it, but remotely, and more by opinion than by nature. We stand very little more in need of offices, rules, and laws of living in our society, than cranes and ants do in theirs; and yet we see that these carry themselves very regularly without erudition. If man was wise, he would take the true value of every thing according as it was useful and proper to his life. Whoever will number us by our actions and deportments will find many more excellent men amongst the ignorant than among the learned; aye, in all sorts of virtue. Old Rome seems to me to have been of much greater value, both for peace and war, than that learned Rome that ruined itself. And, though all the rest should be equal, yet integrity and innocency would remain to the ancients, for they cohabit singularly well with simplicity. But I will leave this discourse, that would lead me farther than I am willing to follow; and shall only say this further, 'tis only humility and submission that can make a complete good man. We are not to leave the knowledge of his duty to every man's own judgment; we are to prescribe it to him, and not suffer him to choose it at his own discretion; otherwise, according to the imbecility, and infinite variety of our reasons and opinions, we should at large forge ourselves duties that would, as Epicurus says,[1] enjoin us to eat one another.

Humility and submission the parents of virtue.

The first law that ever God gave to man was a law of pure obedience; it was a commandment naked and simple, wherein man had nothing to inquire after, nor to dispute; forasmuch as to obey is the proper office of a rational soul, acknowledging a

Pure obedience the first law of God to man.

[1] Or rather the Epicurean *Colotes*, as may be seen in the treatise that Plutarch wrote against him.

heavenly superior and benefactor. From obedience and submission spring all other virtues, as all sin does from self-opinion. And, on the contrary, the first temptation that by the devil was offered to human nature, its first poison insinuated itself into us by the promise made us of knowledge and wisdom; *Eritis sicut Dii, scientes bonum et malum.*[1] "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And the sirens, in Homer, to allure Ulysses, and draw him within the danger of their snares, offered to give him knowledge.[2] The plague of man is the opinion of wisdom; and for this reason it is that ignorance is so recommended to us, by our religion, as proper to faith and obedience; *Cavete ne quis vos decipiat per philosophiam et inanes seductiones, secundum elementa mundi.*[3] "Take heed, lest any man deceive you by philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world." There is in this a general consent amongst all sorts of philosophers, that the sovereign good consists in the tranquillity of the soul and body; but where shall we find it?

> Ad summum, sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives,
> Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum;
> Præcipue sanus, nisi cum pituita molesta est:[4]
>
> "In short, the wise is only less than Jove,
> Rich, free, and handsome; nay, a king above
> All earthly kings; with health supremely blest,
> Excepting when a cold disturbs his rest!"

It seems, in truth, that nature, for the consolation of our miserable and wretched state, has only given us presumption for our inheritance. 'Tis as Epictetus says, that man has nothing properly his own, but the use of his opinion;[5] we have nothing but wind and smoke for our portion. The gods have health in essence, says philosophy, and sickness in intelligence. Man, on the contrary, possesses his goods by fancy, his ills in essence. We have reason to magnify the

[1] *Genesis*, iii. 5.
[2] *Odyssey*, xii. 188. Cicero, *de Fin.* v. 18.
[3] St. Paul, *Coloss.* ii. 8.
[4] Hor. *Epist.* i. 1, 106.
[5] *Manual*, c. 11.

power of our imagination; for all our goods are only in dream. Hear this poor calamitous animal huff! "There is nothing," says Cicero, "so charming as the employment of letters; of letters, I say, by means whereof the infinity of things, the immense grandeur of nature, the heavens even in this world, the earth, and the seas are discovered to us; 'tis they that have taught us religion, moderation, and the grandeur of courage, and that have rescued our souls from darkness, to make her see all things, high, low, first, last, and middling; 'tis they that furnish us wherewith to live happily and well, and conduct us to pass over our lives without displeasure, and without offence." [1] Does not this man seem to speak of the condition of the ever-living and almighty God? But as to effects, a thousand little countrywomen have lived lives more equal, more sweet, and constant than his.

> Deus ille fuit, deus, inclyte Memmi,
> Qui princeps vitæ rationem invenit eam, quæ
> Nunc appellatur sapientia; quique per artem
> Fluctibus è tantis vitam, tantisque tenebris,
> In tam tranquilla et tam clara luce locavit: [2]
>
> "That god, great Memmus, was a god no doubt
> Who, prince of life, first found that reason out
> Now wisdom called; and by his art, who did
> That life in tempests tost, and darkness hid,
> Place in so great a calm, and clear a light:"

here are brave ranting words; but a very slight accident put this man's [3] understanding in a worse condition than that of the meanest shepherd, notwithstanding this instructing god, this divine wisdom. Of the same stamp and impudence is the promise of Democritus's book: "I am going to speak of all things;" [4] and that foolish title that Aristotle prefixes to one of his,

Temerity and presumption of some philosophers.

[1] *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 26.

[2] Lucret. i. 8.

[3] This was Lucretius, who, in the preceding verses, speaks so pompously of Epicurus and his doctrine; for a love-potion, that was given him either by his wife or his mistress, so much disturbed his reason that the violence of his disorder only afforded him a few lucid intervals, which he employed in composing his book, and at last made him kill himself. —Eusebius's *Chronicon*.

[4] "Qui ita sit ausus ordiri hæc loquor de universis nihil excipit de quo non profitetur; quid enim esse potest extra universa?—Cic. *Acad. Quest.* ii. 23.

Of the Mortal Gods;[1] and the judgment of Chrysippus, that "Dion was as virtuous as God;"[2] and my Seneca himself says, that "God had given him life; but that to live well was his own;" conformably to this other: *In virtute verè gloriamur; quod non contingeret, si id donum à Deo, non à nobis haberemus:*[3] "We truly glory in our virtue; which would not be, if it was given us of God, and not by ourselves;" this is also Seneca's saying; "that the wise man hath fortitude equal with God, but that his is in spite of human frailty, wherein therefore he more than equals God."[4] There is nothing so ordinary as to meet with sallies of the like temerity; there is none of us, who take so much offence to see himself equalled with God, as he does to see himself undervalued by being ranked with other creatures; so much more are we jealous of our own interest than that of our Creator.

But we must trample under foot this foolish vanity, and briskly and boldly shake the ridiculous foundation upon which these false opinions are founded. So long as man shall believe he has any means and power of himself, he will never acknowledge what he owes to his Maker; his eggs shall always be chickens, as the saying is; we must therefore strip him to his shirt. Let us see some notable examples of the effects of his philosophy: Posidonius being tormented with a disease so painful as made him writhe his arms and gnash his teeth, thought he sufficiently scorned the dolour, by crying out against it: "Thou mayst do thy worst, I will not confess that thou art an evil."[5] He was as sensible of the pain as my footman, but he made a bravado of bridling his tongue, at least, and restraining it within the laws of his sect: *Re succumbere non oportebat, verbis gloriantem.*[6] "It did not become him, that spoke so big, to confess his frailty when he

[1] Apud Ciceronem *de Finibus*, ii. 13. "Cyrenaici philosophi non viderunt, ut ad cursum, equum; ad arandum bovem; ad indagandum canem; sic hominem ad duas res, ut ait Aristoteles, intelligendum et agendum, esse natum, quasi mortalem deum."

[2] Plutarch, *Of the Common Conceptions of the Stoics.*

[3] Cic. *de Nat. Deor.* iii. 36.

[4] *Epist.* 53, *sub fine.*

[5] Cicero. *Tusc. Quæst.* ii. 25.

[6] Id. *ib.* 12.

came to the test." Arcesilas being ill of the gout, and Carneades, who had come to see him, going away troubled at his condition, he called him back, and showing him his feet and breast: "There is nothing comes thence hither," said he.[1] This has something a better grace, for he feels himself in pain, and would be disengaged from it; but his heart, notwithstanding, is not conquered nor subdued by it. The other stands more obstinately to his point, but, I fear, rather verbally than really. And Dionysius Heracleotes, afflicted with a vehement smarting in his eyes, was reduced to quit these stoical resolutions.[2] But even though knowledge should, in effect, do as they say, and could blunt the point, and dull the edge, of the misfortunes that attend us, what does she, more than what ignorance does more purely and evidently?—The philosopher Pyrrho, being at sea in very great danger, by reason of a mighty storm, presented nothing to the imitation of those who were with him, in that extremity, but a hog they had on board, that was fearless and unconcerned at the tempest.[3] Philosophy, when she has said all she can, refers us at last to the example of a gladiator, wrestler, or muleteer, in which sort of people we commonly observe much less apprehension of death, sense of pain, and other inconveniences, and more of endurance, than ever knowledge furnished any one withal, that was not born and bred to hardship. What is the cause that we make incisions, and cut the tender limbs of an infant, and those of a horse, more easily than our own—but ignorance only? How many has mere force of imagination made sick? We often see men cause themselves to be let blood, purged, and physicked, to be cured of diseases they only feel in opinion.—When real infirmities fail us, knowledge lends us her's; that colour, that complexion, portend some catarrhous defluxion; this hot season threatens us with a fever; this breach in the life-line of your left hand gives you

Diseases caused by imagination.

1 Cicero, *de Finib.* v. 31.
2 Id. *ib.*
3 Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

notice of some near and dangerous indisposition; and at last she roundly attacks health itself; saying, this sprightliness and vigour of youth cannot continue in this posture; there must be blood taken, and the heat abated, lest it turn against yourself. Compare the life of a man subjected to such imaginations, to that of a labourer that suffers himself to be led by his natural appetite, measuring things only by the present sense, without knowledge, and without prognostic, that feels no pain or sickness, but when he is really ill. Whereas the other has the stone in his soul, before he has it in his bladder; as if it were not time enough to suffer the evil when it shall come, he must anticipate it by fancy, and run to meet it.

What I say of physic may generally serve in example for all other sciences. Thence is derived that ancient opinion of the philosophers [1] that placed the sovereign good in the discovery of the weakness of our judgment. My ignorance affords me as much occasion of hope as of fear; and having no other rule for my health than that of the examples of others, and of events I see elsewhere upon the like occasion, I find of all sorts, and rely upon those which by comparison are most favourable to me. I receive health with open arms, free, full, and entire, and by so much the more whet my appetite to enjoy it, by how much it is at present less ordinary and more rare; so far am I from troubling its repose and sweetness with the bitterness of a new and constrained manner of living. Beasts sufficiently show us how much the agitation of our minds brings infirmities and diseases upon us. That which is told us of those of Brazil, that they never die but of old age, is attributed to the serenity and tranquillity of the air they live in; but I rather attribute it to the serenity and tranquillity of their souls, free from all passion, thought, or employment, extended or unpleasing, a people that pass over their lives in a wonderful simplicity and ignorance, without letters, without law, without king, or any man-

[1] The Skeptics

ner of religion. And whence comes that, which we find by experience, that the heaviest and dullest men are most able, and the most to be desired in amorous performances; and that the love of a muleteer often renders itself more acceptable than that of a gentleman, if it be not that the agitation of the soul in the latter disturbs his physical ability, dissolves and tires it, as it also ordinarily troubles and tires itself. What puts the soul beside itself, and more usually throws it into madness, but her own promptness, vigour, and agility, and, finally, her own proper force? Of what is the most subtle folly made, but of the most subtle wisdom? As great friendships spring from great enmities, and vigorous health from mortal diseases, so from the rare and vivid agitations of our souls proceed the most wonderful and most distracted frenzies; 'tis but half a turn of the toe from the one to the other. In the actions of madmen we see how infinitely madness resembles the most vigorous operations of the soul. Who does not know how indiscernible the difference is betwixt folly and the sprightly elevations of a free soul, and the effects of a supreme and extraordinary virtue? Plato says that melancholy persons are the most capable of discipline, and the most excellent; and accordingly in none is there so great a propension to madness. Great wits are ruined by their own proper force and pliability; into what a condition, through his own agitation and promptness of fancy, is one of the most judicious, ingenious, and nearest formed, of any other Italian poet, to the air of the ancient and true poesy, lately fallen! Has he not vast obligation to this vivacity that has destroyed him? to this light that has blinded him? to this exact and subtle apprehension of reason that has put him beside his own? to this curious and laborious search after sciences, that has reduced him to imbecility? and to this rare aptitude to the exercises of the soul, that has rendered him without exercise and without soul? I was more angry, if possible, than compassionate, to see him at Ferrara in so pitiful a condition surviving himself, forgetting both himself and

his works, which, without his knowledge, though before his face, have been published unformed and incorrect.[1]

Stupidity accompanied by vigour and health.

Would you have a man healthy, would you have him regular, and in a steady and secure posture? Muffle him up in the shades of stupidity and sloth. We must be made beasts to be made wise, and hoodwinked before we are fit to be led. And if one shall tell me that the advantage of having a cold and dull sense of pain and other evils, brings this disadvantage along with it, to render us consequently less sensible also in the fruition of good and pleasure, this is true; but the misery of our condition is such that we have not so much to enjoy as to avoid, and that the extremest pleasure does not affect us to the degree that a light grief does: *Segnius homines bona quam mala sentiunt.*[2] We are not so sensible of the most perfect health as we are of the least sickness.

Pungit
In cute vix summâ violatum plagula corpus;
Quando valere nihil quemquam movet. Hoc juvat unum,
Quod me non torquet latus, aut pes; Cætera quisquam
Vix queat aut sanum sese, aut sentire valentem.[3]

"The body with a little sting is griev'd,
When the most perfect health is not perceiv'd,
This only pleases me, that spleen nor gout
Neither offend my side nor wring my foot;
Excepting these, scarce any one can tell,
Or e'er observes, when he's in health and well."

Our well-being is nothing but the not being ill. Which is the reason why that sect of philosophers, which sets the greatest value upon pleasure, has yet fixed it chiefly in unconsciousness of pain. To be freed from ill is the greatest good that man can hope for or desire; as Ennius says,—

Nimium boni est, cui nihil est mali;[4]

[1] Montaigne here refers to Tasso, whom he saw at Ferrara in November, 1581, confined in the Hospital of St. Anne, where he remained from March, 1579, till July, 1586. Curiously enough, Montaigne does not mention the circumstance in his journey. It is almost equally curious that Mr. Cotton refers his reader to Ariosto, instead of Tasso, though Ariosto was 59 years old when Montaigne came into the world.

[2] Livy. xxx. 21.

[3] Stephen de la Boëtie, in the Latin satire already quoted, Book i. c. 27.

[4] *Apud* Cicero *de Finib.* ii. 13.

for that every tickling and sting which are in certain pleasures, and that seem to raise us above simple health and passiveness, that active, moving, and, I know not how, itching, and biting pleasure; even that very pleasure itself aims at nothing but insensibility as its mark. The appetite that carries us headlong to women's embraces has no other end but only to cure the torment of our ardent and furious desires, and only requires to be glutted and laid at rest, and delivered from the fever. And so of the rest. I say, then, that if simplicity conducts us to a state free from evil, she leads us to a very happy one according to our condition. And yet we are not to imagine it so stupid an insensibility as to be totally without sense; for Crantor had very good reason to controvert the insensibility of Epicurus, if founded so deep that the very first attack and birth of evils were not to be perceived: "I do not approve such an insensibility as is neither possible nor to be desired. I am very well content not to be sick; but if I am, I would know that I am so; and if a caustic be applied, or incisions made in any part, I would feel them."[1] In truth, whoever would take away the knowledge and sense of evil, would at the same time eradicate the sense of pleasure, and finally annihilate man himself: *Istud nihil dolere, non sine magnâ mercede contingit, immanitatis in animo, stuporis in corpore.*[2] "An insensibility that is not to be purchased but at the price of inhumanity in the soul, and of stupidity of the body." Evil appertains to man of course. Neither is pain always to be avoided, nor pleasure always pursued.

Perfect insensibility neither possible nor desirable.

'Tis a great advantage to the honour of ignorance that knowledge itself throws us into its arms, when she finds herself puzzled to fortify us against the weight of evil; she is constrained to come to this composition, to give us the reins, and permit us to fly into the lap of the other, and to shelter ourselves under her protection from the strokes and injuries of fortune. For

Knowledge refers us to ignorance to screen us from the injuries of fortune.

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iii. 7. [2] Id. *ib.* 6.

what else is her meaning when she instructs us to divert our thoughts from the ills that press upon us, and entertain them with the meditation of pleasures past and gone; to comfort ourselves in present afflictions with the remembrance of fled delights, and to call to our succour a vanished satisfaction, to oppose it to the discomfort that lies heavy upon us? *Levationes ægritudinum in avocatione a cogitandâ molestiâ, et revocatione ad contemplandas voluptates, ponit;*[1] "He directs us to alleviate our grief and pains by rejecting unpleasant thoughts, and recalling agreeable ideas;" if it be not that where her power fails she would supply it with policy, and make use of sleight of hand where force of limbs will not serve her turn? For not only to a philosopher, but to any man in his right wits, when he has upon him the thirst of a burning fever, what satisfaction can it be to him to remember the pleasure he took in drinking Greek wine a month ago? It would rather only make matters worse to him:—

Che ricordarsi il ben doppia la noia.

"The thinking of pleasure doubles trouble."

Of the same stamp is this other counsel that philosophy gives, only to remember the happiness that is past, and to forget the misadventures we have undergone;[2] as if we had the science of oblivion in our own power, and counsel, wherein we are yet no more to seek.

Suavis laborum est præteritorum memoria.[3]

"Sweet is the memory of by-gone pain."

How does philosophy, that should arm me to contend with fortune, and steel my courage to trample all human adversities under foot, arrive to this degree of cowardice to make me hide my head at this rate, and save myself by these pitiful and ridiculous shifts? For the memory represents to us not what we choose, but what she pleases; nay, there is nothing that so much imprints any thing in our memory as a

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iii. 15.
[2] Id. *ib.*
[3] Euripides, *apud* Cicer. *de Finib.* ii. 32.

desire to forget it. And 'tis a good way to retain and keep any thing safe in the soul to solicit her to lose it. And this is false: *Est situm in nobis, ut et adversa quasi perpetuâ oblivione obruamus, et secunda jucunde et suaviter memineri-mus;*[1] "it is in our power to bury, as it were, in a perpetual oblivion, all adverse accidents, and to retain a pleasant and delightful memory of our successes;" and this is true: *Memini etiam quæ nolo; oblivisci non possum quæ volo.*[2] "I do also remember what I would not; but I cannot forget what I would." And whose counsel is this? His,[3] *qui se unus sapientem profiteri sit ausus;*[4] "who alone durst profess himself a wise man."

> Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, et omnes
> Præstinxit stellas, exortus uti æthereus Sol.[5]
>
> "Who from mankind the prize of knowledge won,
> And put the stars out like the rising sun."

To empty and disfurnish the memory, is not this the true way to ignorance?

> Iners malorum remedium ignorantia est.[6]
>
> "Ignorance is but a dull remedy for evils."

We find several other like precepts, whereby we are permitted to borrow frivolous appearances from the vulgar, where we find the strongest reason will not answer the purpose, provided they administer satisfaction and comfort. Where they cannot cure the wound, they are content to palliate and benumb it. I believe they will not deny this, that if they could add order and constancy in a state of life that could maintain itself in ease and pleasure by some debility of judgment, they would accept it:—

> Potare, et spargere flores
> Incipiam, patiarque vel inconsultus haberi.[7]
>
> "Give me to drink, and, crown'd with flowers, despise
> The grave disgrace of being thought unwise."

[1] Cicero, *de Finib.* i. 17.
[2] Id. *ib.* ii. 32.
[3] Epicurus.
[4] Cicero, *ut supra*, ii. 32.
[5] Lucretius, iii. 1056.
[6] Seneca, *Œdipus*, iii. 7.
[7] Horace, *Epist.* i. 5, 14.

There would be a great many philosophers of Lycas's mind; this man, being otherwise of very regular manners, living quietly and contentedly in his family, and not failing in any office of his duty, either towards his own or strangers, and very carefully preserving himself from hurtful things, became, nevertheless, by some distemper in his brain, possessed with a conceit that he was perpetually in the theatre, a spectator of the finest sights and the best comedies in the world; and being cured by the physicians of his frenzy, was hardly prevented from endeavouring by suit to compel them to restore him again to his pleasing imagination:—

> Pol! me occidistis, amici,
> Non servastis, ait; cui sic extorta voluptas,
> Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error;[1]
>
> "By heaven! you've killed me, friends, outright,
> And not preserved me; since my dear delight
> And pleasing error, by my better sense
> Unhappily return'd, is banished hence;"

with a madness like that of Thrasylaus the son of Pythodorus, who made himself believe that all the ships that weighed anchor from the port of Piræus, and that came into the haven, only made their voyages for his profit; congratulating them upon their successful navigation, and receiving them with the greatest joy; and when his brother Crito caused him to be restored to his better understanding, he infinitely regretted that sort of condition wherein he had lived with so much delight and free from all anxiety of mind.[2] 'Tis according to the old Greek verse, that "there is a great deal of convenience in not being over-wise:"—

> Ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν, ἥδιστος βίος.[3]

And Ecclesiastes,[4] "In much wisdom there is much sorrow;" and "Who gets wisdom gets labour and trouble."

Even that to which philosophy consents in general, that

[1] Horace, *Epist.* ii. 2, 138.
[2] Athenæus, xii. Ælian, *Var. Hist.* iv. 25, where the name is Thrasyllus.
[3] Sophocles, in Ajace Μαστιγοφόρῳ, ver. 554.
[4] I. 18.

last remedy which she applies to all sorts of necessities, to put an end to the life we are not able to endure. *Placet?—Pare. Non placet?—Quâcumque vis, exi.*[1] *Pungit dolor?—Vel fodiat sane. Si nudus es, da jugulum; sin tectus armis Vulcaniis, id est fortitudine, resiste;*[2] "Does it please?—Obey it. Not please?—Go where thou wilt. Does grief prick thee,—nay, stab thee?—If thou art naked, present thy throat; if covered with the arms of Vulcan, that is, fortitude, resist it." And this word, so used in the Greek festivals, *aut bibat, aut abeat,*[3] "either drink or go," which sounds better upon the tongue of a Gascon,[4] who naturally changes the *b* into *v*, than on that of Cicero:—

> Vivere si recte nescis, decede peritis.
> Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti;
> Tempus abire tibi est, ne potum largius æquo
> Rideat et pulset lasciva decentius ætas.[5]

> "If to live well and right thou dost not know,
> Give way, and leave thy place to those that do.
> Thou'st eaten, drunk, and play'd to thy content,
> 'Tis time to make thy parting compliment,
> Lest youth, more decent in their follies, scoff
> The nauseous scene, and hiss thee reeling off;"

What is it other than a confession of his impotency, and a sending back not only to ignorance, to be there in safety, but even to stupidity, insensibility, and nonentity?

> Democritum postquam matura vetustas
> Admonuit memorem motus languescere mentis;
> Sponte suâ letho caput obvius obtulit ipse.[6]

> "Soon as, through age, Democritus did find
> A manifest decadence in his mind,

[1] An alteration of Seneca, *Epist.* 70, whose words are—"Placet?—Vive. Non placet?—Licet eo reverti, unde venisti."

[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* ii. 13.

[3] An application from Cicero, whose words are these: "Mihi quidem in vitâ servanda videtur illa lex, quæ in Græcorum conviviis obtinetur," &c. *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 4.

[4] This remark upon the Gascon pronunciation (observes Mr. Coste), which chooses to alter *b* into *v*, is only to be applied to the word *bibat*, otherwise it would not be very properly intended here; because, if the *b* in the word *abeat* was changed into *v*, it would mar the construction which Montaigne would put, according to Cicero, upon this phrase: "Aut bibat aut abeat."

[5] Hor. *Epist.* ii. 2, 213.

[6] Lucret. iii. 1052.

He thought he now surviv'd to his own wrong,
And went to meet his death, that stay'd too long."

'Tis what Antisthenes said, "That a man should either make provision of sense to understand, or of a halter to hang himself;"[1] and what Chrysippus[2] alleged upon this saying of the poet Tyrtæus:—

"Or to arrive at virtue or at death;"

and Crates said, "That love would be cured by hunger, if not by time; and whoever disliked these two remedies, by a rope."[3] That Sextius,[4] of whom both Seneca and Plutarch speak with so high an encomium, having applied himself, all other things set aside, to the study of philosophy, resolved to throw himself into the sea, seeing the progress of his studies too tedious and slow. He ran to find death, since he could not overtake knowledge. These are the words of the law upon the subject: "If peradventure some great inconvenience happen, for which there is no remedy, the haven is near, and a man may save himself by swimming out of his body as out of a leaky skiff; for 'tis the fear of dying, and not the love of life, that ties the fool to his body."

How love is to be cured.

As life renders itself by simplicity more pleasant, so more innocent and better, also it renders it as I was saying before: "The simple and ignorant," says St. Paul, "raise themselves up to heaven and take possession of it; and we, with all our knowledge, plunge ourselves into the infernal abyss." I am neither swayed by Valentinian,[5] a professed enemy to all learning and letters, nor by Licinius, both Roman emperors, who called them the poison and pest of all political government; nor by Mahomet, who, as 'tis said, interdicted all manner of learning to his followers; but the example of the great Lycurgus, and his authority, with the reverence of the divine Lacedemonian policy, so

The Lacedemonian policy without letters.

[1] Plutarch, *Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers.*
[2] Id. *ib.*
[3] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*
[4] The Pythagorean, who is also frequently referred to by Seneca.
[5] *Valens.*

great, so admirable, and so long flourishing in virtue and happiness, without any institution or practice of letters, ought certainly to be of very great weight. Such as return from the new world discovered by the Spaniards in our fathers' days, testify to us how much more honestly and regularly those nations live, without magistrate and without law, than ours do, where there are more officers and lawyers than there are of other sorts of men and business:—

The new world without law or magistrate.

Di cittatorie piene, e di libelli,
D'esamine, e di carte di procure,
Hanno le mani e il seno, e gran fastelli
Di chiose, di consigli, et di letture:
Per cui le faculta de' poverelli
Non sono mai nelle città sicure;
Hanno dietro e dinanzi, e d'ambi i lati,
Notai, procuratori, ed avvocati.[1]

"Their bags were full of writs, and of citations,
Of process, and of actions and arrests,
Of bills, of answers, and of replications,
In courts of delegates, and of requests,
To grieve the simple sort with great vexations;
They had resorting to them as their guests,
Attending on their circuit, and their journeys,
Scriv'ners, and clerks, and lawyers, and attorneys."

It was what a Roman senator of the latter ages said, that their predecessors' breath stunk of garlic, but their stomachs were perfumed with a good conscience;[2] and that, on the contrary, those of his time were all sweet odour without, but stunk within of all sorts of vices; that is to say, as I interpret it, that they abounded with learning and eloquence, but were very defective in moral honesty. Incivility, ignorance, simplicity, roughness, are the natural companions of innocence; curiosity, subtlety, knowledge, bring malice in their train; humility, fear, obedience, and affability, which are the principal things that support and maintain human society, require an empty and docile soul, and little presuming upon itself.

[1] Ariosto, *Cant.* 14, *Stanz.* 84.
[2] A remark of Varro, which may be seen in Nonius Marcellus, at the word *Cepe*.

Fatal effects of curiosity and pride

Christians have a particular knowledge, how natural and original an evil curiosity is in man; the thirst of knowledge, and the desire to become more wise, was the first ruin of man, and the way by which he precipitated himself into eternal damnation. Pride was his ruin and corruption. 'Tis pride that diverts him from the common path, and makes him embrace novelties, and rather choose to be head of a troop, lost and wandering in the path of error; to be a master and a teacher of lies, than to be a disciple in the school of truth, suffering himself to be led and guided by the hand of another, in the right and beaten road. 'Tis, peradventure, the meaning of this old Greek saying, that superstition follows pride, and obeys it as if it were a father: ἡ δεισιδαιμονία καθάπερ πατρὶ τῷ τύφῳ πείθεται.[1] Ah, presumption, how much dost thou hinder us?

After that Socrates was told that the god of wisdom had assigned to him the title of sage, he was astonished at it, and, searching and examining himself throughout, could find no foundation for this divine judgment. He knew others as just, temperate, valiant, and learned, as himself; and more eloquent, more handsome, and more profitable to their country than he. At last he concluded that he was not distinguished from others, nor wise, but only because he did not think himself so; and that his God considered the opinion of knowledge and wisdom as a singular absurdity in man; and that his best doctrine was the doctrine of ignorance, and simplicity his best wisdom.[2] The sacred word declares those miserable among us who have an opinion of themselves: "Dust and ashes," says it to such, "what hast thou wherein to glorify thyself?" And, in another place, "God has made man like unto a shadow," of whom who can judge, when by removing the light it shall be vanished! Man is a thing of nothing.

Our force is so far from being able to comprehend the divine height, that, of the works of our Creator, those best bear his mark, and are with better title his, which we the

[1] Socrates, *apud* Stobæum. *Serm.* xxii. [2] Plato, *Apology for Socrates.*

least understand. To meet with an incredible thing is an occasion to Christians to believe; and it is so much the more according to reason, by how much it is against human reason. If it were according to reason, it would be no more a miracle; and if it were according to example, it would be no longer a singular thing. *Melius scitur Deus nesciendo:*[1] "God is better known by not knowing him," says St. Austin: and Tacitus,[2] *Sanctius est ac reverentius de actis Deorum credere, quam scire;* "it is more holy and reverent to believe the works of God than to know them;" and Plato thinks there is something of impiety in inquiring too curiously into God, the world, and the first causes of things: *Atque illum quidem parentem hujus universitatis invenire, difficile; et, quum jam inveneris, indicare in vulgus, nefas:*[3] "to find out the parent of the world is very difficult; and when found out, to reveal him to the vulgar is sin," says Cicero. We talk indeed of power, truth, justice; which are words that signify some great thing; but that thing we neither see nor conceive at all. We say that God fears, that God is angry, that God loves,

Too curious an inquiry into the divine nature is to be condemned.

What our notions of the divine Being amount to.

Immortalia mortali sermone notantes:[4]

"Giving to things immortal mortal names."

These are all agitations and emotions that cannot be in God, according to our form, nor can we imagine them, according to his. It only belongs to God to know himself, and to interpret his own works; and he does it in our language, going out of himself, to stoop to us who grovel upon the earth. How can prudence, which is the choice between good and evil, be properly attributed to him whom no evil can touch? How can reason and intelligence, which we make use of, to arrive by obscure at apparent things; seeing that nothing is obscure to him? How justice, which distributes to every

[1] *De Ordine*, iii. 16.
[2] *De Mor. German*, c. 34.
[3] Cicero, translation of the *Timæus* of Plato, c. 2.
[4] Lucret. v. 122.

one what appertains to him, a thing begot by the society and community of men, how is that in God? How temperance, which is the moderation of corporal pleasures, that have no place in the Divinity? Fortitude to support pain, labour, and dangers, as little appertains to him as the rest; these three things have no access to him."[1] For which reason Aristotle[2] holds him equally exempt from virtue and vice: *Neque gratiâ, neque irâ teneri potest; quod quæ talia essent, imbecilla essent omnia.*[3] "He can neither be affected with favour nor indignation, because both these are the effects of frailty."

Whence comes our knowledge of the truth.

The participation we have in the knowledge of truth, such as it is, is not acquired by our own force: God has sufficiently given us to understand that, by the witnesses he has chosen out of the common people, simple and ignorant men, that he has been pleased to employ to instruct us in his admirable secrets. Our faith is not of our own acquiring; 'tis purely the gift of another's bounty: 'tis not by meditation, or by virtue of our own understanding, that we have acquired our religion, but by foreign authority and command; wherein the imbecility of our own judgment does more assist us than any force of it; and our blindness more than our clearness of sight: 'tis more by the mediation of our ignorance than of our knowledge that we know any thing of the divine wisdom. 'Tis no wonder if our natural and earthly parts cannot conceive that supernatural and heavenly knowledge: let us bring nothing of our own, but obedience and subjection; for, as it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."[4]

[1] Cicero, *de Nat. Deorum.* iii. 15.
[2] Ethics, vii. 1.
[3] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* i. 17.
[4] 1 Corinthians, i. 19–21.

Finally, should I examine whether it be in the power of man to find out that which he seeks and if that quest, wherein he has busied himself so many ages, has enriched him with any new force, or any solid truth; I believe he will confess, if he speaks from his conscience, that all he has got by so long inquiry is only to have learned to know his own weakness. We have only by a long study confirmed and verified the natural ignorance we were in before. The same has fallen out to men truly wise, which befalls the ears of corn; they shoot and raise their heads high and pert, whilst empty; but when full and swelled with grain in maturity, begin to flag and droop. So men, having tried and sounded all things, and having found in that mass of knowledge, and provision of so many various things, nothing solid and firm, and nothing but vanity, have quitted their presumption, and acknowledged their natural condition. 'Tis what Velleius reproaches Cotta withal and Cicero, "that they had learned of Philo, that they had learned nothing."[1] Pherecydes, one of the seven sages, writing to Thales upon his death-bed; "I have," said he, "given order to my people, after my interment, to carry my writings to thee. If they please thee and the other sages, publish; if not, suppress them. They contain no certainty with which I myself am satisfied. Neither do I pretend to know the truth, or to attain to it. I rather open than discover things."[2] The wisest man that ever was, being asked what he knew, made answer, "He knew this, that he knew nothing."[3] By which he verified what has been said, that the greatest part of what we know is the least of what we do not; that is to say, that even what we think we know is but a piece, and a very little one, of our ignorance. We know things in dreams, says Plato, and are ignorant of them in truth. *Omnes pene veteres nihil cognosci, nihil percipi, nihil sciri posse dixerunt; angustos sensus,*

[1] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* i. 17.
[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*
[3] *Socrates.* Cicero, *Acad.* i. 4. In the edition of 1588, after "the wisest man that ever was," Montaigne added, "and who never said a thing which more entitled him to the distinction than this."

imbecilles animos, brevia curricula vitæ.[1] "Almost all the ancients have declared that there is nothing to be known, nothing to be perceived or understood; the senses are too limited, men's minds too weak, and the course of life too short." And of Cicero himself, who stood indebted to his learning for all he was worth, Valerius says,[2] "That he began to disrelish letters in his old age; and when at his studies, it was with great independency upon any one party; following what he thought probable, now in one sect, and then in another, evermore wavering under the doubts of the academy." *Dicendum est, sed ita ut nihil affirmem, quæram omnia, dubitans plerumque, et mihi diffidens.*[3] "Something I must say, but so as to affirm nothing; I inquire into all things, but for the most part in doubt and distrust of myself."

I should have too fair a game should I consider man in his common way of living and in gross; yet I might do it by his own rule, who judges truth not by weight, but by the number of votes. Let us set the people aside,

> Qui vigilans stertit, ...
> Mortua cui vita est prope jam vivo atque videnti;[4]
>
> "Half of his life by lazy sleep's possess'd,
> And when awake his soul but nods at best;"

who neither feel nor judge, and let most of their natural faculties lie idle; I will take man in his highest ground. Let us consider him in that little number of men, excellent and culled out from the rest, who, having been endowed with a remarkable and particular natural force, have moreover hardened and whetted it by care, study, and art, and raised it to the highest pitch of wisdom to which it can possibly arrive. They have adjusted their souls to all ways and all biases; have propped and supported them with all foreign

Of the knowledge to which the greatest geniuses have attained by study and art.

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* i. 13.

[2] The reader will have some difficulty in finding any thing of the sort stated in Valerius Maximus. M. de la Monnoye suggests that Montaigne was led into the mistake by some incorrect passage in the editions of this author, but Barbeyrac shows that this passage had already deceived John of Salisbury (*Policrat.* viii. 12), from whom Montaigne probably contented himself with translating, without referring to the original at all.

[3] Cicero, *de Divinat.* ii. 3.

[4] Lucret. iii. 1061, 1069.

helps proper for them, and enriched and adorned them with all they could borrow for their advantage, both within and without the world; 'tis in these is placed the utmost and most supreme height to which human nature can attain. They have regulated the world with policies and laws. They have instructed it with arts and sciences, and by the example of their admirable manners. I shall make account of none but such men as these, their testimony and experience. Let us examine how far they have proceeded, and where they stopped. The errors and defects that we shall find amongst these men the world may boldly avow as their own.

Whoever goes in search of any thing must come to this, either to say that he has found it, or that it is not to be found, or that he is yet upon the search. All philosophy is divided into these three kinds; her design is to seek out truth, knowledge, and certainty. The Peripatetics, Epicureans, Stoics, and others, have thought they have found it. These established the sciences we have, and have treated of them as of certain knowledge. Clitomachus, Carneades, and the Academics, have despaired in their search, and concluded that truth could not be conceived by our understandings. The result of these is weakness and human ignorance. This sect has had the most and the most noble followers. Pyrrho, and other skeptics or epechists, whose dogmas are held by many of the ancients to be taken from Homer, the seven sages, and from Archilochus and Euripides, and to whose number these are added, Zeno, Democritus, and Xenophanes, say that they are yet upon the inquiry after truth. These conclude that the others, who think they have found it out, are infinitely deceived; and that it is too daring a vanity in the second sort to determine that human reason is not able to attain unto it: for this establishing a standard of our power, to know and judge the difficulty of things, is a great and extreme knowledge, of which they doubt whether man is capable:[1] —

All philosophy divided into three kinds.

[1] In this very style does Sextus Empiricus, the famous Pyrrhonian, from whom Montaigne has taken many things, begin his treatise of the Pyrrhonian hypothe-

Nil sciri quisquis putat, id quoque nescit,
An sciri possit; quum se nil scire fatetur.[1]

"He that says nothing can be known, o'erthrows
His own opinion, for he nothing knows,
So knows not that."

The ignorance that knows itself, judges and condemns itself, is not an absolute ignorance; to be such, it must be ignorant of itself; so that the profession of the Pyrrhonians is to waver, doubt, and inquire, not to make themselves sure of, or responsible to themselves for any thing. Of the three actions of the soul, imaginative, appetitive, and consentive, they receive the two first; the last they kept ambiguous, without inclination or approbation, either of one thing or another, so light as it is. Zeno represented the motion of his imagination upon these divisions of the faculties of the soul thus: "An open and expanded hand signified appearance; a hand half shut, and the fingers a little bending, consent; a clenched fist, comprehension; when with the left he yet thrust the right fist closer, knowledge."[2] Now this situation of their judgment upright and inflexible, receiving all objects without application or consent, leads them to their ataraxy, which is a peaceable condition of life, temperate, and exempt from the agitations we receive by the impression of opinion and knowledge that we think we have of things; whence spring fear, avarice, envy, immoderate desires, ambition, pride, superstition, love of novelty, rebellion, disobedience, obstinacy, and the greatest part of bodily ills; nay, and by that they are exempt from the jealousy of their discipline; for they debate after a very gentle manner; they fear no requital in their disputes; when they affirm that heavy things descend they would be sorry to be believed, and love to be contradicted, to engender doubt and suspense of judgment, which is their end. They only

Doubt and suspense of judgment the principle of Pyrrhonism.

sis; and infers, as Montaigne does, that there are three general methods of philosophizing, the one dogmatic, the other academic, and the other skeptic. The first affirm they have found the truth, the next declare it to be above our comprehension, and the others are still in quest of it.

[1] Lucret. iv. 471.

[2] Cicero, *Acad.* iv. 67.

put forward their propositions to contend with those they think we have in our belief. If you take their arguments, they will as readily maintain the contrary; 'tis all one to them, they have no choice. If you maintain that snow is black, they will argue on the contrary that it is white; if you say it is neither the one nor the other, they will maintain that it is both. If you hold, of certain judgment, that you know nothing, they will maintain that you do. Yea, and if by an affirmative axiom you assure them that you doubt, they will argue against you that you doubt not; or that you cannot judge and determine that you doubt. And by this extremity of doubt, which jostles itself, they separate and divide themselves from many opinions, even of those they have several ways maintained, both concerning doubt and ignorance. "Why shall not they be allowed to doubt," say they, "as well as the dogmatists, one of whom says green, another yellow? Can any thing be proposed to us to grant, or deny, which it shall not be permitted to consider as ambiguous?" And where others are carried away, either by the custom of their country, or by the instruction of parents, or by accident, as by a tempest, without judgment and without choice, nay, and for the most part before the age of discretion, to such and such an opinion, to the sect whether Stoic or Epicurean, with which they are prepossessed, enslaved, and fast bound, as to a thing they cannot forsake: *Ad quamcumque disciplinam, velut tempestate, delati, ad eam, tanquam ad saxum, adhærescunt;*[1] "every one cleaves to the doctrine he has happened upon, as to a rock against which he has been thrown by tempest;" why shall not these likewise be permitted to maintain their liberty, and consider things without obligation or slavery? *hoc liberiores et solutiores, quod integra illis est judicandi potestas:*[2] "in this more unconstrained and free, because they have the greater power of judging." Is it not of some advantage to be disengaged from the necessity that curbs others? Is it not better to remain in suspense than to

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 8. [2] Id. *ib.* ii.

entangle one's self in the innumerable errors that human fancy has produced? Is it not much better to suspend one's persuasion than to intermeddle with these wrangling and seditious divisions: "What shall I choose?" "What you please, provided you will choose."[1] A very foolish answer; but such a one, nevertheless, as all dogmatism seems to point at, and by which we are not permitted to be ignorant of what we are ignorant of.

Take the most eminent side, that of the greatest reputation; it will never be so sure that you shall not be forced to attack and contend with a hundred and a hundred adversaries to defend it. Is it not better to keep out of this hurly-burly? You are permitted to embrace Aristotle's opinions of the immortality of the soul with as much zeal as your honour and life, and to give the lie to Plato thereupon, and shall they be interdicted to doubt him? If it be lawful for Panætius[2] to maintain his opinion about augury, dreams, oracles, vaticinations, of which the Stoics made no doubt at all; why may not a wise man dare to do the same in all things that he dared to do in those he had learned of his masters, established by the common consent of the school, whereof he is a professor and a member? If it be a child that judges, he knows not what it is; if a wise man, he is prepossessed. They have reserved for themselves a marvellous advantage in battle, having eased themselves of the care of defence. If you strike them, they care not, provided they strike too, and they turn every thing to their own use. If they overcome, your argument is lame; if you, theirs; if they fall short, they verify ignorance; if you fall short, you do it; if they prove that nothing is known, 'tis well; if they cannot prove it, 'tis also well: *Ut quum in eadem re paria contrariis in partibus momenta inveniuntur, facilius ab utraque parte assertio sustineatur:*[3] "That when like sentiments happen *pro* and *con* in the same thing, the assent may on both sides be more

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 33.
[2] Montaigne continues to quote Cicero *Acad.* ii.
[3] Cicero, *Acad.* i. 13.

easily suspended." And they make account to find out, with much greater facility, why a thing is false, than why 'tis true; that which is not, than that which is; and what they do not believe, than what they do. Their way of speaking is: "I assert nothing; it is no more so than so, or than neither one nor t'other; I understand it not. Appearances are everywhere equal; the law of speaking, *pro* or *con*, is the same. Nothing seems true, that may not seem false." Their sacramental word is ἐπέχω, that is to say, "I hold, I stir not." This is the burden of their song, and others of like stuff. The effect of which is a pure, entire, perfect, and absolute suspension of judgment. They make use of their reason to inquire and debate, but not to fix and determine. Whoever shall imagine a perpetual confession of ignorance, a judgment without bias, propension, or inclination, upon any occasion whatever, conceives a true idea of Pyrrhonism. I express this fancy as well as I can, by reason that many find it hard to conceive, and the authors themselves represent it a little variously and obscurely.

The common style of the Pyrrhonians.

As to what concerns the actions of life, they are in this of the common fashion. They yield and give up themselves to their natural inclinations,[1] to the power and impulse of passions, to the constitution of laws and customs, and to the tradition of arts; *Non enim nos Deus ista scire, sed tantummodo uti, voluit.*[2] "For God would not have us know, but only use those things." They suffer their ordinary actions to be guided by those things, without any dispute or judgment. For which reason I cannot consent to what is said of Pyrrho, by those[3] who represent him heavy and immovable, leading a kind of savage and unsociable life, standing the jostle of carts, going upon the edge of precipices, and refusing to accommodate himself to the laws. This is to enhance upon his discipline; he would never make himself a stock or a stone, he would show him-

Their manner of life.

[1] So Sextus Empiricus declares expressly, and in so many words. *Pyrrh. Hypot.* i. c. 2.

[2] Cicero, *de Divin.* i. 18.

[3] Laertius, Lucian, Aulus Gellius, and others.

self a living man, discoursing, reasoning, enjoying all reasonable conveniences and pleasures, employing and making use of all his corporal and spiritual faculties in rule and reason. The fantastic, imaginary, and false privileges that man had usurped of lording it, ordaining, and establishing, he has utterly quitted and renounced. Yet there is no sect but is constrained to permit her sage to follow several things not comprehended, perceived, or consented to, if he means to live. And if he goes to sea, he follows that design, not knowing whether his voyage shall be successful or no; and only insists upon the tightness of the vessel, the experience of the pilot, and the convenience of the season, and such probable circumstances; after which he is bound to go, and suffer himself to be governed by appearances, provided there be no express and manifest contrariety in them. He has a body, he has a soul; the senses push them, the mind spurs them on. And although he does not find in himself this proper and singular sign of judging, and that he perceives that he ought not to engage his consent, considering that there may be some false, equal to these true appearances, yet does he not, for all that, fail of carrying on the offices of his life with great liberty and convenience. How many arts are there that profess to consist more in conjecture than knowledge; that decide not on true and false, and only follow that which seems so! There are, say they, true and false, and we have in us wherewith to seek it; but not to make it stay when we touch it. We are much more prudent, in letting ourselves be regulated by the order of the world, without inquiry. A soul clear from prejudice has a marvellous advance towards tranquillity and repose. Men that judge and control their judges, do never duly submit to them.

The wise man is determined in life by appearances.

How much more docile and easy to be governed, both by the laws of religion and civil polity, are simple and incurious minds, than those over-vigilant wits, that will still be prating of divine and

What minds are best disposed to submit to religion, and the rules of government.

human causes! There is nothing in human invention that carries so great a show of likelihood and utility as this; this presents man, naked and empty, confessing his natural weakness, fit to receive some foreign force from above, unfurnished of human, and therefore more apt to receive into him the divine knowledge, making nought of his own judgment, to give more room to faith; neither disbelieving nor establishing any dogma against common observances; humble, obedient, disciplinable, and studious; a sworn enemy of heresy; and consequently freeing himself from vain and irreligious opinions, introduced by false sects. 'Tis a blank paper prepared to receive such forms from the finger of God as he shall please to write upon it. The more we resign and commit ourselves to God, and the more we renounce ourselves, of the greater value we are. "Take in good part," says Ecclesiastes, "the things that present themselves to thee, as they seem and taste from hand to mouth; the rest is out of thy knowledge."[1] *Dominus novit cogitationes hominum, quoniam vanæ sunt:* "The Lord knoweth the hearts of men, that they are but vanity."[2]

Thus we see that of the three general sects of philosophy, two make open profession of doubt and ignorance; and in that of the Dogmatists, which is the third, it is easy to discover that the greatest part of them only assume this face of confidence and assurance that they may produce the better effect; they have not so much thought to establish any certainty for us, as to show us how far they have proceeded in their search of truth: *Quam docti fingunt magis quam nôrunt:*[3] "Which the learned rather feign than know." Timæus, being to instruct Socrates in what he knew of the gods, the world, and men, proposes to speak to him as a man to a man; and that it is sufficient, if his reasons are probable as those of another; for that exact reasons were neither in his nor any other mortal hand; which one of his followers has thus imitated: *Ut po-*

The result of the profession of the Dogmatists.

[1] iii. 22. [2] Psalm, xciv. 11. [3] Plato, *Timæus.*

tero, explicabo: nec tamen, ut Pythius Apollo, certa ut sint et fixa quæ dixero; sed, ut homunculus, probabilia conjecturâ sequens:[1] "I will, as well as I am able, explain; affirming, yet not as the Pythian oracle, that what I say is fixed and certain, but like a mere man, that follows probabilities by conjecture." And this, upon the natural and common subject of the contempt of death; he has elsewhere translated from the very words of Plato: *Si forte, de Deorum naturâ ortuque mundi disserentes, minus id quod habemus in animo consequimur, haud erit mirum; æquum est enim meminisse, et me, qui disseram, hominem esse, et vos, qui judicetis, ut, si probabilia dicentur, nihil ultra requiratis.*[2] "If perchance, when we discourse of the nature of God, and the world's original, we cannot do it as we desire, it will be no great wonder. For it is just you should remember that both I who speak and you who are to judge, are men; so that if probable things are delivered, you shall require and expect no more." Aristotle ordinarily heaps up a great number of other men's opinions and beliefs, to compare them with his own, and to let us see how much he has gone beyond them, and how much nearer he approaches to the likelihood of truth; for truth is not to be judged by the authority and testimony of others; which made Epicurus religiously avoid quoting them in his writings. This is the prince of all dogmatists, and yet we are told by him that the more we know the more we have room for doubt.[3] In earnest, we sometimes see him shroud and muffle up himself in so thick and so inextricable an obscurity that we know not what to make of his advice; it is, in effect, a Pyrrhonism under a resolutive form. Hear Cicero's protestation, who expounds to us another's fancy by his own: *Qui requirunt quid de quâque re ipsi sentiamus, curiosius id faciunt quam necesse est. . . Hæc in philosophiâ ratio, contra omnia disserendi, nullamque rem apertè judicandi, profecta*

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 9.

[2] Cicero, *Translation of the Timæus*, c. 3.

[3] *Qui plura novit, cum majora sequuntur dubia.* This is a saying, not of Aristotle, but of Æneas Sylvius, who became Pope, under the title of Pius II.

a Socrate, repetita ab Arcesila, confirmata a Carneade, usque ad nostram viget ætatem. . . . . Hi sumus, qui omnibus veris falsa quædam adjuncta esse dicamus, tantâ similitudine, ut in iis nulla insit certe judicandi et assentiendi nota.[1] "They who desire to know what we think of every thing are therein more inquisitive than is necessary. This practice in philosophy of disputing against every thing, and of absolutely concluding nothing, begun by Socrates, repeated by Arcesilaus, and confirmed by Carneades, has continued in use even to our own times. We are they who declare that there is so great a mixture of things false amongst all that are true, and they so resemble one another, that there can be in them no certain mark to direct us either to judge or assent." Why hath not Aristotle only, but most of the philosophers, affected difficulty, if not to set a greater value upon the vanity of the subject, and amuse the curiosity of our minds by giving them this hollow and fleshless bone to pick? Clitomachus affirmed "That he could never discover by Carneades's writings what opinion he was of."[2] This was it that made Epicurus affect

[1] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* i. 5.

[2] Montaigne (remarks Mr. Coste) has supposed this to be the meaning of Cicero, whose words are these: "The opinion of which Calliphon Carneades so studiously defended that he even seemed to approve of it, although Clitomachus affirmed that he never could understand what was approved by Carneades."—*Acad. Quæst.* x. 45. But this is not saying "That Clitomachus asserted that, by the writings of Carneades, he could never discover his opinion." The dispute is not what were the opinions of Carneades in the general, but what he used to say in defence of Calliphon's private opinion concerning what constitutes man's chief good. Forasmuch as Carneades was an Academician, he could not advance any thing positive or clearly decisive upon this important question, which was the reason that Clitomachus never could understand what was the opinion of Carneades in this matter. Calliphon made the chief good consist in pleasure and virtue both together, which, says Cicero, Carneades also was not willing to contradict, "not that he approved it, but that he might oppose the Stoics; not to decide the thing, but to embarrass the Stoics." —*Acad. Quæst.* iv. 42. In this same book Cicero explains to us several of Carneades's opinions; and, what is very remarkable, he only does it as they are set forth by Clitomachus. "Having," says he, "explained all that Carneades says upon this subject, all those opinions of Antiochus (the Stoic) will fall to the ground. But, for fear lest I should be suspected of making him say what I think, I shall deliver nothing but what I collect from Clitomachus, who passed his life with Carneades till he was an old man, and, being a Carthaginian, was a man of great penetration, very studious, moreover, and very exact." *Acad. Quæst.* iv. 31. "I have," says Cicero, "a little before explained to you from the words of Clitomachus, in what sense Carneades declared these matters." These very things Cicero repeats afterwards, where he transcribes them from a book which Clitomachus had composed and addressed to the poet Lucilius. After this, how could Cicero make Clitomachus say that, by the writings of Carneades in general, he could never discover what were his sentiments? The truth is that Clitomachus had not read the writings of Carneades; for, except some letters that

to be abstruse, and that procured Heraclitus the epithet of σκοτεινὸς.[1] Difficulty is a coin the learned make use of, like jugglers, to conceal the vanity of their art, and which human sottishness easily takes for current pay.

> Clarus, ob obscuram linguam, magis inter inanes . . .
> Omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantque
> Inversis quæ sub verbis latitantia cernunt.[2]

> "Bombast and riddle best do puppies please,
> For fools admire and love such things as these;
> And a dull quibble, wrapt in dubious phrase,
> Up to the height doth their wise wonder raise."

Cicero[3] reprehends some of his friends for giving more of their time to the study of astrology, logic, and geometry, than they were really worth; saying that they were by these diverted from the duties of life, and from more profitable and proper studies. The Cyrenaick philosophers, in like manner, despised physics and logic.[4] Zeno, in the very beginning of the books of the commonwealth, declared all the liberal arts of no use.[5] Chrysippus said "That what Plato and Aristotle had writ, concerning logic, they had only done in sport, and by way of exercise;" and could not believe that they spoke in earnest of so vain a thing. Plutarch says the same of metaphysics.[6] And Epicurus would have said as much of rhetoric, grammar, poetry, mathematics, and, natural philosophy excepted, of all the sciences; and Socrates of them all, excepting that which treats of manners and of life. Whatever any one required to be instructed in, by him, he would ever, in the first place, demand an account of the conditions of his life present and past, which he examined and judged, esteeming all other

The liberal arts despised by some of the sects of the philosophers.

wrote to Anarathes, King of Cappadocia, which ran in his name, the rest of his opinions, as Diogenes Laertius says expressly, were preserved in the books of his disciples.—*In Vitâ Carneadis.* The same historian tells us that Clitomachus, who composed above 400 volumes, applied himself above all things to illustrate the sentiments of Carneades, whom he succeeded.

[1] *Obscure.* Cicero, *de Fin* ii. 5.
[2] Lucret. i. 640.
[3] *De Offic.* i. 6.
[4] Laertius, ii. 92.
[5] Id. *in Vitâ.*
[6] Plutarch. *Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers*, where, however, Chrysippus says just the contrary to what is here attributed to him.

learning subsequent to that and supernumerary: *Parum mihi placeant eæ litteræ quæ ad virtutem doctoribus nihil profuerunt.*[1] "That learning is in small repute with me which nothing profited the teachers themselves to virtue." Most of the arts have been in like manner decried by the same knowledge; but they did not consider that it was from the purpose to exercise their wits in those very matters wherein there was no solid advantage.

As to the rest, some have looked upon Plato as a dogmatist, others as a doubter, others in some things the one, and in other things the other. Socrates, the conductor of his dialogues, is eternally upon questions and stirring up disputes, never determining, never satisfying, and professes to have no other science but that of opposing himself. Homer, their author, has equally laid the foundations of all the sects of philosophy, to show how indifferent it was which way we should choose. 'Tis said that ten several sects sprung from Plato; yet, in my opinion, never did any instruction halt and stumble, if his does not.

Socrates said that midwives,[2] in taking upon them the trade of helping others to bring forth, left the trade of bringing forth themselves; and that by the title of a wise man or sage, which the gods had conferred upon him, he was disabled, in his virile and mental love, of the faculty of bringing forth, contenting himself to help and assist those that could; to open their nature, anoint the passes, and facilitate their birth; to judge of the infant, baptize, nourish, fortify, swath, and circumcise it, exercising and employing his understanding in the perils and fortunes of others.

It is so with the most part of this third sort of authors, as the ancients have observed in the writings of Anaxagoras, Democritus, Parmenides, Xenophanes, and others. They have a way of writing, doubtful in substance and design, rather inquiring than teaching, though they mix their style

[1] Sallust. *Bell. Jug.* c. 85, where the text is somewhat different.

[2] In French, *sages-femmes*.—See Plato, *Theætetus*.

with some dogmatical periods. Is not the same thing seen in Seneca and Plutarch? How many contradictions are there to be found if a man pry narrowly into them! So many that the reconciling lawyers ought first to reconcile them every one to themselves. Plato seems to have affected this method of philosophizing in dialogues; to the end that he might with greater decency, from several mouths, deliver the diversity and variety of his own fancies. It is as well to treat variously of things as to treat of them conformably, and better, that is to say, more copiously and with greater profit. Let us take example from ourselves: judgments are the utmost point of all dogmatical and determinative speaking; and yet those *arrêts* that our parliaments give the people, the most exemplary of them, and those most proper to nourish in them the reverence due to that dignity, principally through the sufficiency of the persons acting, derive their beauty not so much from the conclusion, which with them is quotidian and common to every judge, as from the dispute and heat of divers and contrary arguments that the matter of law and equity will permit. And the largest field for reprehension that some philosophers have against others is drawn from the diversities and contradictions wherein every one of them finds himself perplexed, either on purpose to show the vacillation of the human mind concerning every thing, or ignorantly compelled by the volubility and incomprehensibility of all matter; which is the meaning of the maxim—"In a slippery and sliding place let us suspend our belief;" for, as Euripides says,—

"God's various works perplex the thoughts of men."[1]

Like that which Empedocles, as if transported with a divine fury, and compelled by truth, often strewed here and there in his writings: "No, no, we feel nothing, we see nothing; all things are concealed from us; there is not one thing of which we can positively say what it is;"[2] according to the

[1] Plutarch, *Of the Oracles that have ceased.*

[2] Cicero, *Quæst. Acad.* iv. 5.

divine saying: *Cogitationes mortalium timidæ, et incertæ adinventiones nostræ et providentiæ.*[1] "For the thoughts of mortal men are doubtful; and our devices are but uncertain." It is not to be thought strange if men, despairing to overtake what they hunt after, have not however lost the pleasure of the chase; study being of itself so pleasant an employment; and so pleasant that amongst the pleasures, the Stoics forbid that also which proceeds from the exercise of the mind, will have it curbed, and find a kind of intemperance in too much knowledge.

The search of truth a very agreeable occupation.

Democritus having eaten figs[2] at his table that tasted of honey, fell presently to considering with himself whence they should derive this unusual sweetness; and to be satisfied in it, was about to rise from the table to see the place whence the figs had been gathered; which his maid observing, and having understood the cause, smilingly told him that "he need not trouble himself about that, for she had put them into a vessel in which there had been honey." He was vexed at this discovery, and that she had deprived him of the occasion of this inquiry, and robbed his curiosity of matter to work upon: "Go thy way," said he, "thou hast done me an injury; but, for all that, I will seek out the cause as if it were natural;" and would willingly have found out some true reason for a false and imaginary effect. This story of a famous and great philosopher very clearly represents to us that studious passion that puts us upon the pursuit of things, of the acquisition of which we despair. Plutarch gives a like example of some one who would not be satisfied in that whereof he was in doubt, that he might not lose the pleasure of inquiring into it; like the other who would not that his physician should allay the thirst of his fever, that he might not lose the pleasure of quenching it by drinking. *Satius est supervacua discere, quam nihil.*[3] "'Tis better to learn more

[1] *Wisdom*, ix. 14.

[2] The word in Plutarch (*Table Talk*, Book i. ques. 10) is σίκυον, a cucumber, and not σῦκον, a fig, as Montaigne has translated it, copying after Amyot and Xylander.

[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 88.

than necessary than nothing at all." As in all sorts of feeding, the pleasure of eating is very often single and alone, and that what we take, which is acceptable to the palate, is not always nourishing or wholesome; so that which our minds extract from science does not cease to be pleasant, though there be nothing in it either nutritive or healthful. Thus they say: "The consideration of nature is a diet proper for our minds, it raises and elevates us, makes us disdain low and terrestrial things, by comparing them with those that are celestial and high. The mere inquisition into great and occult things is very pleasant, even to those who acquire no other benefit than the reverence and fear of judging it." This is what they profess.[1] The vain image of this sickly curiosity is yet more manifest in this other example which they so often urge. "Eudoxus wished and begged of the gods that he might once see the sun near at hand, to comprehend the form, greatness, and beauty of it; even though he should thereby be immediately burned."[2] He would at the price of his life purchase a knowledge, of which the use and possession should at the same time be taken from him; and for this sudden and vanishing knowledge lose all the other knowledge he had in present, or might afterwards have acquired.

The atoms of Epicurus, the ideas of Plato, the numbers of Pythagoras, to what end they were advanced.

I cannot easily persuade myself that Epicurus, Plato, and Pythagoras, have given us their atoms, ideas, and numbers, for current pay. They were too wise to establish their articles of faith upon things so disputable and uncertain. But in that obscurity and ignorance in which the world then was, every one of these great men endeavoured to present some kind of image or reflection of light, and worked their brains for inventions that might have a pleasant and subtle appearance; provided that, though false, they

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 41. Seneca, *Nat. Quæs.* i.

[2] Plutarch, *That you cannot live joyously according to the doctrine of Epicurus*. See also Laertius in the *Life of Eudoxus*, who was a celebrated Pythagorean, contemporary with Plato.

might make good their ground against those that would oppose them. *Unicuique ista pro ingenio finguntur, non ex scientiæ vi.*[1] "These things every one fancies according to his wit, and not by any power of knowledge."

What is true philosophy. Conduct of the philosophers with regard to religion and to the laws.

One of the ancients, who was reproached, "That he professed philosophy, of which he nevertheless in his own judgment made no great account," made answer, "That this was truly to philosophize." They wished to consider all, to balance every thing, and found that an employment well suited to our natural curiosity. Some things they wrote for the benefit of public society, as their religions; and for that consideration it was but reasonable that they should not examine public opinions to the quick, that they might not disturb the common obedience to the laws and customs of their country.

Plato treats of this mystery with a raillery manifest enough; for where he writes according to his own method he gives no certain rule. When he plays the legislator he borrows a magisterial and positive style, and boldly there foists in his most fantastic inventions, as fit to persuade the vulgar, as impossible to be believed by himself; knowing very well how fit we are to receive all sorts of impressions, especially the most immoderate and preposterous; and yet, in his *Laws*, he takes singular care that nothing be sung in public but poetry, of which the fiction and fabulous relations tend to some advantageous end; it being so easy to imprint all sorts of phantasms in human minds, that it were injustice not to feed them rather with profitable untruths than with untruths that are unprofitable and hurtful. He says very roundly, in his *Republic*,[2] "That it is often necessary, for the benefit of men, to deceive them." It is very easy to distinguish that some of the sects have more followed truth, and the others utility, by which the last have gained their reputation. 'Tis the misery of our condition that often that which

[1] M. Seneca, *Suasor.* 4

[2] Book v.

presents itself to our imagination for the truest does not appear the most useful to life. The boldest sects, as the Epicurean, Pyrrhonian, and the new Academic, are yet constrained to submit to the civil law at the end of the account.

There are other subjects that they have tumbled and tossed about, some to the right and others to the left, every one endeavouring, right or wrong, to give them some kind of colour; for, having found nothing so abstruse that they would not venture to speak of, they are very often forced to forge weak and ridiculous conjectures; not that they themselves looked upon them as any foundation, or establishing any certain truth, but merely for exercise. *Non tam id sensisse quod dicerent, quam exercere ingenia materiæ difficultate videntur voluisse.* "They seem not so much themselves to have believed what they said, as to have had a mind to exercise their wits in the difficulty of the matter." And if we did not take it thus, how should we palliate so great inconstancy, variety, and vanity of opinions, as we see have been produced by those excellent and admirable men? As, for example, what can be more vain than to imagine, to guess at God, by our analogies and conjectures? To direct and govern him and the world by our capacities and our laws? And to serve ourselves, at the expense of the divinity, with what small portion of capacity he has been pleased to impart to our natural condition; and because we cannot extend our sight to his glorious throne, to have brought him down to our corruption and our miseries?

The most probable of all human opinions touching religion.

Of all human and ancient opinions concerning religion, that seems to me the most likely and most excusable, that acknowledged God as an incomprehensible power, the original and preserver of all things, all goodness, all perfection, receiving and taking in good part the honour and reverence that man paid him, under what method, name, or ceremonies soever:—

Jupiter omnipotens, rerum, regumque, deûmque,
Progenitor, genitrixque.[1]

"Jove, the almighty, author of all things,
The father, mother, of both gods and kings."

This zeal has universally been looked upon from heaven with a gracious eye. All governments have reaped fruit from their devotion; impious men and actions have everywhere had suitable events. Pagan histories acknowledge dignity, order, justice, prodigies, and oracles, employed for their profit and instruction in their fabulous religions; God, through his mercy, vouchsafing, by these temporal benefits, to cherish the tender principles of a kind of brutish knowledge that natural reason gave them of him, through the deceiving images of their dreams. Not only deceiving and false, but impious also and injurious, are those that man has forged from his own invention; and of all the religions that St. Paul found in repute at Athens, that which they had dedicated "to the unknown God" seemed to him the most to be excused.[2]

What the knowledge of God was among the Pagans.

The unknown God adored at Athens.

Pythagoras shadowed the truth a little more closely, judging that the knowledge of this first cause and being of beings ought to be indefinite, without limitation, without declaration: that it was nothing else than the extreme effort of our imagination towards perfection, every one amplifying the idea according to the talent of his capacity. But if Numa attempted to conform the devotion of his people to this project; to attach them to a religion purely mental, without any prefixed object and material mixture, he undertook a thing of no use; the human mind could never support itself floating in such an infinity of inform thoughts; there is required some certain image to be presented according to its own model. The divine majesty has thus, in some sort, suffered himself to be circumscribed in corporal limits for our advan-

[1] These which are the verses of Valerius Soranus were preserved from Varro, from whom St. Augustine has inserted them in his book, *Ce Civitate Dei*, vii. 9, 11.

[2] *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii. 23.

tage. His supernatural and celestial sacraments have signs of our earthly condition; his adoration is by sensible offices and words; for 'tis man that believes and prays. I shall omit the other arguments upon this subject; but a man would have much ado to make me believe that the sight of our crucifixes, that the picture of our Saviour's passion, that the ornaments and ceremonious motions of our churches, that the voices accommodated to the devotion of our thoughts, and that emotion of the senses, do not warm the souls of the people with a religious passion of very advantageous effect.

Of those to whom they have given a body, as necessity required in that universal blindness, I should, I fancy, most incline to those who adored the sun:—

La Lumière commune,
L'œil du monde; et si Dieu au chef porte des yeulx,
Les rayons du soleil sont ses yeulx radieux,
Qui donnent vie à touts, nous maintiennent et gardent,
Et les faicts des humains en ce monde regardent:
Ce beau, ce grand soleil qui nous faict les saisons,
Selon qu'il entre ou sort de ses douze maisons;
Qui remplit l'univers de ses vertus cognues;
Qui d'un traict de ses yeulx nous dissipe les nues;
L'esprit, l'ame du monde, ardent et flamboyant,
En la course d'un jour tout le Ciel tournoyant;
Plein d'immense grandeur, rond, vagabond, et ferme;
Lequel tient dessoubs luy tout le monde pour terme:
En repos, sans repos; oysif, et sans séjour;
Fils aisné de nature, et le père du jour:[1]

"The common light that equal shines on all,
Diffused around the whole terrestrial ball;
And, if the almighty Ruler of the skies
Has eyes, the sunbeams are his radiant eyes,
That life and safety give to young and old,
And all men's actions upon earth behold.
This great, this beautiful, the glorious sun,
Who makes their course the varied seasons run;
That with his virtues fills the universe,
And with one glance can sullen clouds disperse;
Earth's life and soul, that, flaming in his sphere,
Surrounds the heavens in one day's career;

[1] Ronsard.

Immensely great, moving yet firm and round,
Who the whole world below has made his bound;
At rest, without rest, idle without stay,
Nature's first son, and father of the day: "

forasmuch as, beside this grandeur and beauty of his, 'tis the only piece of this machine that we discover at the remotest distance from us; and by that means so little known that they were pardonable for entering into so great admiration and reverence of it.

Thales,[1] who first inquired into this sort of matter, believed God to be a Spirit that made all things of water; Anaximander, that the gods were always dying and entering into life again; and that there were an infinite number of worlds; Anaximines, that the air was God, that he was procreate and immense, always moving. Anaxagoras the first, was of opinion that the description and manner of all things were conducted by the power and reason of an infinite spirit. Alcmæon gave divinity to the sun, moon, and stars, and to the soul. Pythagoras made God a spirit, spread over the nature of all things, whence our souls are extracted; Parmenides, a circle surrounding the heaven, and supporting the world by the ardour of light. Empedocles pronounced the four elements, of which all things are composed, to be gods; Protagoras had nothing to say, whether they were or were not, or what they were; Democritus was one while of opinion that the images and their circuitions were gods; another while, the nature that darts out those images; and then, our science and intelligence. Plato divides his belief into several opinions; he says, in his *Timæus*, that the Father of the World cannot be named; in his Laws, that men are not to inquire into his being; and elsewhere, in the very same books, he makes the world, the heavens, the stars, the earth, and our souls, gods; admitting, moreover, those which have been received by ancient institution in every republic.

[1] This following analysis of the Heathen Mythology is principally taken from Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* i 10, &c.

Xenophon reports a like perplexity in Socrates's doctrine; one while that men are not to inquire into the form of God, and presently makes him maintain that the sun is God, and the soul God; that there is but one God, and then that there are many. Speusippus, the nephew of Plato, makes God a certain power governing all things, and that he has a soul. Aristotle one while says it is the spirit, and another the world; one while he gives the world another master, and another while makes God the heat of heaven. Zenocrates makes eight, five named amongst the planets; the sixth composed of all the fixed stars, as of so many members; the seventh and eighth, the sun and moon. Heraclides Ponticus does nothing but float in his opinion, and finally deprives God of sense, and makes him shift from one form to another, and at last says that it is heaven and earth. Theophrastus wanders in the same irresolution amongst his fancies, attributing the superintendency of the world one while to the understanding, another while to heaven, and then to the stars. Strato says that 'tis nature, she having the power of generation, augmentation, and diminution, without form and sentiment. Zeno says 'tis the law of nature, commanding good and prohibiting evil; which law is an animal; and takes away the accustomed gods, Jupiter, Juno, and Vesta. Diogenes Apolloniates, that 'tis air.[1] Zenophanes makes God round, seeing and hearing, not breathing, and having nothing in common with human nature. Aristo thinks the form of God to be incomprehensible, deprives him of sense, and knows not

[1] This word having been misprinted *age* in the earlier editions of the Essays, the blunder has been hitherto carefully retained, though one of the most obvious description. Cicero himself, from whom Montaigne is quoting, says expressly elsewhere (*De Nat. Deor.* i 12), that "air is the god of Diogenes Appolloniates;" with him agrees St. Augustin, in his book *de Civitate Dei*, viii. 2, from whom it also appears that this philosopher ascribed sense to the air, and that he called it the matter out of which all things were formed, and that it was endowed with divine reason, without which nothing could be made. M. Bayle, in his dictionary at the article of "Diogenes of Apollonia," infers, "that he made a whole, or a compound, of air and the divine virtue, in which, if air was the matter, the divine virtue was the soul and form; and that, by consequence, the air, animated by the divine virtue, ought, according to that philosopher, to be styled God. As for the rest, this philosopher, by ascribing understanding to the air, differed from his master Anaximenes, who thought the air inanimate." Montaigne himself says, further on in the chapter, 'Either the infinity of nature of Anaximander, or the *air* of Diogenes, or the numbers and symmetries of Pythagoras."

whether he be an animal or something else; Cleanthes, one while supposes it to be reason, another while the world, another the soul of nature, and then the supreme heat rolling about, and environing all. Perseus, Zeno's disciple, was of opinion that men have given the title of gods to such as have been useful, and have added any notable advantage to human life, and even to profitable things themselves. Chrysippus made a confused heap of all the preceding theories, and reckons, amongst a thousand forms of gods that he makes, the men also that have been deified. Diagoras and Theodorus flatly denied that there were any gods at all. Epicurus makes the gods shining, transparent, and perflable, lodged as betwixt two forts, betwixt two worlds, secure from blows, clothed in a human figure, and with such members as we have; which members are to them of no use:—

> Ego Deûm genus esse semper duxi, et dicam cœlitum;
> Sed eos non curare opinor quid agat humanum genus.[1]
>
> "I ever thought that gods above there were,
> But do not think they care what men do here."

Trust to your philosophy, my masters; and brag that you have found the bean in the cake when you see what a rattle is here with so many philosophical heads! The perplexity of so many worldly forms has gained this over me, that manners and opinions contrary to mine do not so much displease as instruct me; nor so much make me proud as they humble me, in comparing them. And all other choice than what comes from the express and immediate hand of God seems to me a choice of very little privilege. The policies of the world are no less opposite upon this subject than the schools, by which we may understand that fortune itself is not more variable and inconstant, nor more blind and inconsiderate, than our reason. The things that are most unknown are most proper to be deified; wherefore to make gods of ourselves, as the ancients did, exceeds the extremest weakness of understanding. I would much rather have gone along

[1] Ennius, *apud* Cicero, *de Divin.* ii. 50.

with those who adored the serpent, the dog, or the ox; forasmuch as their nature and being is less known to us, and that we have more room to imagine what we please of those beasts, and to attribute to them extraordinary faculties. But to have made gods of our own condition, of whom we ought to know the imperfections; and to have attributed to them desire, anger, revenge, marriages, generation, alliances, love, jealousy, our members and bones, our fevers and pleasures, our death and obsequies; this must needs have proceeded from a marvellous inebriety of the human understanding;

To make gods of men is the utmost degree of extravagance.

> Quæ procul usque adeo divino ab numine distant,
> Inque Deûm numero quæ sint indigna videri; [1]
>
> "From divine natures these so distant are,
> They are unworthy of that character."

Formæ, ætates, vestitus, ornatus noti sunt; genera, conjugia, cognationes, omniaque traducta ad similitudinem imbecillitatis humanæ: nam et perturbatis animis inducuntur; accipimus enim deorum cupiditates, ægritudines, iracundias; [2] "Their forms, ages, clothes, and ornaments are known: their descents, marriages, and kindred, and all adapted to the similitude of human weakness; for they are represented to us with anxious minds, and we read of the lusts, sickness, and anger of the gods;" as having attributed divinity not only to faith, virtue, honour, concord, liberty, victory, and piety; but also to voluptuousness, fraud, death, envy, old age, misery; to fear, fever, ill fortune, and other injuries of our frail and transitory life:—

> Quid juvat hoc, templis nostros inducere mores?
> O curvæ in terris animæ et cœlestium inanes!" [3]
>
> "O earth-born souls! by earth-born passions led,
> To every spark of heav'nly influence dead!
> Think ye that what man values will inspire
> In minds celestial the same base desire?"

[1] Lucret. v. 123.
[2] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* ii. 28.
[3] Pers. ii. 61. Montaigne has transposed the lines, and instituted *inducere* for *immittere*.

The Egyptians, with an impudent prudence, interdicted, upon pain of hanging, that any one should say that their gods, Serapis and Isis, had formerly been men; and yet no one was ignorant that they had been such; and their effigies, represented with the finger upon the mouth, signified, says Varro,[1] that mysterious decree to their priests, to conceal their mortal original, as it must by necessary consequence cancel all the veneration paid to them. Seeing that man so much desired to equal himself to God, he had done better, says Cicero,[2] to have attracted those divine conditions to himself, and drawn them down hither below, than to send his corruption and misery up on high; but, to take it right, he has several ways done both the one and the other, with like vanity of opinion.

Whether the philosophers were serious in treating of the hierarchy of their gods, and of the condition of men in another life.

When philosophers search narrowly into the hierarchy of their gods, and make a great bustle about distinguishing their alliances, offices, and power, I cannot believe they speak as they think. When Plato describes Pluto's orchard to us, and the bodily conveniences or pains that attend us after the ruin and annihilation of our bodies, and accommodates them to the feeling we have in this life:—

> Secreti celant calles, et myrtea circum
> Sylva tegit; curæ non ipsâ in morte relinquunt;[3]
>
> "In secret vales and myrtle groves they lie,
> Nor do cares leave them even when they die."

when Mahomet promises his followers a Paradise hung with tapestry, gilded and enamelled with gold and precious stones, furnished with wenches of excelling beauty, rare wines, and delicate dishes; it is easily discerned that these are deceivers that accommodate their promises to our sensuality, to attract and allure us by hopes and opinions suitable to our mortal appetites. And yet some amongst us are fallen into the like error, promising to themselves after the resurrection a terres-

[1] Quoted by St. Augustin, *de Civit. Dei*, xviii 5.

[2] *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 26.

[3] *Æneid*, vi. 443.

trial and temporal life, accompanied with all sorts of worldly conveniences and pleasures. Can we believe that Plato, he who had such heavenly conceptions, and was so well acquainted with the Divinity as thence to derive the name of the Divine Plato, ever thought that the poor creature, man, had any thing in him applicable to that incomprehensible power? and that he believed that the weak holds we are able to take were capable, or the force of our understanding sufficient, to participate of beatitude or eternal pains? We should then tell him from human reason: "If the pleasures thou dost promise us in the other life are of the same kind that I have enjoyed here below, this has nothing in common with infinity; though all my five natural senses should be even loaded with pleasure, and my soul full of all the contentment it could hope or desire, we know what all this amounts to, all this would be nothing; if there be any thing of mine there, there is nothing divine; if this be no more than what may belong to our present condition, it cannot be of any value. All contentment of mortals is mortal. Even the knowledge of our parents, children, and friends, if that can affect and delight us in the other world, if that still continues a satisfaction to us there, we still remain in earthly and finite conveniences. We cannot as we ought conceive the greatness of these high and divine promises, if we could in any sort conceive them; to have a worthy imagination of them we must imagine them unimaginable, inexplicable, and incomprehensible, and absolutely another thing than those of our miserable experience. "Eye hath not seen," saith St. Paul, "nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him."[1] And if, to render us capable, our being were reformed and changed (as thou, Plato, sayest, by thy purifications), it ought to be so extreme and total a change, that by physical doctrine it will be no more us;—

What must be the change of our being to qualify us for eternal happiness.

[1] 1 *Corinthians*, ii. 9; after *Isaiah*, lxiv. 4.

Hector erat tunc cum bello certabat; at ille
Tractus ab Æmonio non erat Hector equo;[1]

"He Hector was whilst he could fight, but when
Dragg'd by Achilles' steeds, no Hector then;"

it must be something else that must receive these recompenses:—

Quod mutatur . . . dissolvitur; interit ergo;
Trajiciuntur enim partes, atque ordine migrant.[2]

"Things changed dissolved are, and therefore die;
Their parts are mix'd, and from their order fly."

For in Pythagoras's metempsychosis, and the change of habitation that he imagined in souls, can we believe that the lion, in whom the soul of Cæsar is enclosed, does espouse Cæsar's passions, or that the lion is he? For if it was still Cæsar, they would be in the right who, controverting this opinion with Plato, reproach him that the son might be seen to ride his mother transformed into a mule, and the like absurdities. And can we believe that in the mutations that are made of the bodies of animals into others of the same kind, the new comers are not other than their predecessors? From the ashes of a phœnix, a worm, they say, is engendered, and from that another phœnix;[3] who can imagine that this second phœnix is no other than the first? We see our silk-worms, as it were, die and wither; and from this withered body a butterfly is produced; and from that another worm; how ridiculous would it be to imagine that this was still the first! That which once has ceased to be is no more:—

Nec, si materiam nostram collegerit ætas
Post obitum, rursumque redegerit, ut sita nunc est,
Atque iterum nobis fuerint data lumina vitæ,
Pertineat quidquam tamen ad nos id quoque factum,
Interrupta semel cum sit repetentia nostra.[4]

"Neither tho' time should gather and restore
Our matter to the form it was before,

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* iii. 11, 27.
[2] Lucret. iii. 756.
[3] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* x. 2.
[4] Lucret. iii. 859.

And give again new light to see withal,
Would that new figure us concern at all;
Or we again ever the same be seen,
Our being having interrupted been."

And, Plato, when thou sayest in another placé that it shall be the spiritual part of man that will be concerned in the fruition of the recompense of another life, thou tellest us a thing wherein there is as little appearance of truth:—

Scilicet, avolsis radicibus, ut nequit ullam
Dispicere ipsa oculus rem, seorsum corpore toto;[1]

"No more than eyes once from their optics torn,
Can ever after any thing discern;"

for, by this account, it would no more be man, nor consequently us, who would be concerned in this enjoyment; for we are composed of two principal essential parts, the separation of which is the death and ruin of our being:—

Inter enim jecta est vitæ pausa, vageque
Deerrarunt passim motus ab sensibus omnes;[2]

"When once that pause of life is come between,
'Tis just the same as we had never been;"

we cannot say that the man suffers when the worms feed upon his members, and that the earth consumes them:—

Et nihil hoc ad nos, qui cœtu conjugioque
Corporis atque animæ consistimus uniter apti.[3]

"What's that to us? for we are only we,
While soul and body in one frame agree."

The foundation of rewards and punishments in another life.

Moreover, upon what foundation of their justice can the gods take notice of or reward man after his death for his good and virtuous actions, since it was themselves that put them in the way and mind to do them? And why should they be offended at or punish him for wicked ones, since themselves have created in him so frail a condition, and when, with one glance of their will, they might prevent him from falling? Might not Epicurus, with great colour of human reason, object this to Plato, did

[1] Lucret. iii. 562. [2] Id. *ib.* 872. [3] Id. 857.

he not often save himself with this sentence: "That it is impossible to establish any thing certain of the immortal nature by the mortal?" She does nothing but err throughout, but especially when she meddles with divine things. Who does more evidently perceive this than we? For although we have given her certain and infallible principles; and though we have enlightened her steps with the sacred lamp of truth that it has pleased God to communicate to us; we daily see, nevertheless, that if she swerve never so little from the ordinary path; and that she stray from, or wander out of the way set out and beaten by the church, how soon she loses, confounds and fetters herself, tumbling and floating in this vast, turbulent, and waving sea of human opinions, without restraint, and without any determinate end; so soon as she loses that great and common road, she enters into a labyrinth of a thousand several paths.

The ridiculousness of pretending to know God by comparing him with man.

Man cannot be any thing but what he is, nor imagine beyond the reach of his capacity. "'Tis a greater presumption," says Plutarch,[1] "in them who are but men to attempt to speak and discourse of the gods and demi-gods than it is in a man utterly ignorant of music to give an opinion of singing; or in a man who never saw a camp to dispute about arms and martial affairs, presuming by some light conjecture to understand the effects of an art he is totally a stranger to." Antiquity, I believe, thought to put a compliment upon, and to add something to, the divine grandeur in assimilating it to man, investing it with his faculties, and adorning it with his ugly humours and most shameful necessities; offering it our aliments to eat, presenting it with our dances, mummeries, and farces, to divert it; with our vestments to cover it, and our houses to inhabit, coaxing it with the odour of incense and the sounds of music, with festoons and nosegays; and to accommodate it to our vicious passions,

[1] In his treatise, *Why the Divine Justice sometimes defers the punishment of Crime.*

flattering its justice with inhuman vengeance, and with the ruin and dissipation of things by it created and preserved; as Tiberius Sempronius,[1] who burnt the rich spoils and arms he had gained from the enemy in Sardinia for a sacrifice to Vulcan; and Paulus Æmilius,[2] those of Macedonia, to Mars and Minerva; and Alexander,[3] arriving at the Indian Ocean, threw several great vessels of gold into the sea, in honour of Thetes; and moreover loading her altars with a slaughter not of innocent beasts only, but of men also, as several nations, and ours among the rest, were commonly used to do; and I believe there is no nation under the sun that has not done the same:—

Sulmone creatos
Quatuor hic juvenes, totidem quos educat Ufens,
Viventes rapit, inferias quos immolet umbris.[4]

"Four sons of Sulmo, four whom Ufens bred,
He took in flight, and living victims led,
To please the ghost of Pallas, and expire
In sacrifice before his fun'ral pyre."

The Getæ[5] hold themselves to be immortal, and that their death is nothing but a journey to their god Zamolxis. Every five years they dispatch some one among them to him, to entreat of him such necessaries as they stand in need of. This envoy is chosen by lot, and the form of dispatching him, after he has been instructed by word of mouth what he is to deliver, is that of the assistants, three hold up as many javelins, upon which the rest throw his body with all their force. If he happen to be wounded in a mortal part, and that he immediately dies, 'tis held a certain argument of divine favour; but if he escapes, he is looked upon as a wicked and execrable wretch, and another is dismissed after the same manner in his stead. Amestris,[6] the mother of Xerxes, being grown old, caused at once fourteen young men, of the best families of Persia, to be buried

Sacrifice of fourteen young men.

[1] Livy, xli. 16.
[2] Livy, xlv. 33.
[3] Arrian, vi. 19, Diod. Sicul. 17, 104, are the only historians of Alexander who speak about golden vases thrown into the sea; but they say nothing about the slaughter of men.
[4] *Æneid*, x. 517.
[5] Herod. iv. 94.
[6] Plut. *on Superstition*. Herod. vii. 114. Amestris was the wife of Xerxes.

alive, according to the religion of the country, to gratify some infernal deity. And even to this day the idols of Themixtitan are cemented with the blood of little children, and they delight in no sacrifice but of these pure and infantine souls; a justice thirsty of innocent blood:—

> Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.[1]
>
> "Such impious use was of religion made,
> So many demon acts it could persuade."

Carthaginian children sacrificed to Saturn.

The Carthaginians immolated their own children to Saturn; and those who had none of their own bought of others, the father and mother being in the mean time obliged to assist at the ceremony with a gay and contented countenance.[2]

It was a strange fancy to think to gratify the divine bounty with our afflictions; like the Lacedemonians,[3] who regaled their Diana with the tormenting of young boys, whom they caused to be whipped for her sake, very often to death. It was a savage humour to imagine to gratify the architect by the subversion of his building, and to think to take away the punishment due to the guilty by punishing the innocent; and that poor Iphigenia, at the port of Aulis, should by her death and immolation acquit, towards God, the whole army of the Greeks from all the crimes they had committed;

> Et casta incesto, nubendi tempore in ipso,
> Hostia concideret mactatu mœsta parentis;[4]
>
> "That the chaste virgin in her nuptial band
> Should die by an unnat'ral father's hand;"

and that the two noble and generous souls of the two Decii, the father and the son, to incline the favour of the gods to be propitious to the affairs of Rome, should throw themselves headlong into the thickest of the enemy: *Quæ fuit tanta deorum iniquitas, ut placari populo Romano non possent, nisi tales viri occidissent?*[5] "How great an injustice in the gods was

[1] Lucret. i. 102.
[2] Plutarch, *on Superstition.*
[3] Id. *Apothegms of the Lacedemonians.*
[4] Lucret. i. 99.
[5] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* iii. 6

it that they could not be reconciled to the people of Rome unless such men perished!" To which may be added, that it is not for the criminal to cause himself to be scourged according to his own measure nor at his own time, but that it purely belongs to the judge, who considers nothing as chastisements but the penalty that he appoints, and cannot call that punishment which proceeds from the consent of him that suffers. The divine vengeance presupposes an absolute dissent in us, both for its justice and for our own penalty. And therefore it was a ridiculous humour of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos,[1] who, to interrupt the continued course of his good fortune, and to balance it, went and threw the dearest and most precious jewel he had into the sea, believing that by this voluntary and antedated mishap he bribed and satisfied the revolution and vicissitude of fortune; and she, to mock his folly, ordered it so that the same jewel came again into his hands, found in the belly of a fish. And then to what end were those tearings and dismemberments of the Corybantes, the Menades, and, in our times, of the Mahometans, who slash their faces, bosoms, and limbs, to gratify their prophet; seeing that the offence lies in the will, not in the breast, eyes, genitals, roundness of form, the shoulders, or the throat? *Tantus est perturbatæ mentis, et sedibus suis pulsæ, furor, ut sic dii placentur, quemadmodum ne homines quidem sæviunt.*[2] "So great is the fury and madness of troubled minds when once displaced from the seat of reason, as if the gods should be appeased with what even men are not so cruel as to approve." The use of this natural contexture has not only respect to us, but also to the service of God and other men; 'tis as unjust for us voluntarily to wound or hurt it as to kill ourselves upon any pretence whatever; it seems to be great cowardice and treason to exercise cruelty upon, and to destroy, the functions of the body that are stupid and servile, to spare the soul the solicitude of governing them according to reason: *Ubi iratos deos*

[1] Herod. iii. 4, and 42.

[2] St. August. *de Civit. Dei*, vi. 10.

timent, qui sic propitios habere merentur? In regiæ libidinis voluptatem castrati sunt quidam; sed nemo sibi, ne vir esset, jubente domino, manus intulit.[1] "Where are they so afraid of the anger of the gods as to merit their favour at that rate? Some, indeed, have been made eunuchs for the lust of princes: but no man at his master's command has put his own hand to unman himself." So did they fill their religion with several ill effects:—

Sæpius olim
Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.[2]

"In elder times
Religion did commit most fearful crimes."

Now nothing of ours can in any sort be compared or likened unto the divine nature, which will not blemish and stain it with much imperfection. How can that infinite beauty, power, and goodness, admit of any correspondence or similitude to such abject things as we are, without extreme wrong and manifest dishonour to his divine greatness? *Infirmum dei fortius est hominibus; et stultum dei sapientius est hominibus.* "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."[3] Stilpo, the philosopher, being asked, "Whether the gods were delighted with our adorations and sacrifices?"—"You are indiscreet," answered he; "let us withdraw apart, if you would talk of such things."[4] Nevertheless, we prescribe him bounds, we keep his power besieged by our reasons (I call our ravings and dreams reason, with the dispensation of philosophy, which says, "That the wicked man, and even the fool, go mad by reason, but a particular form of reason"), we would subject him to the vain and feeble appearances of our understandings,—him who has made both us and our knowledge. Because that nothing is made of nothing, God therefore could not make the world without matter. What! has God put into our hands the

The folly of judging of the power and perfections of God according to our conceptions.

[1] St. August. *de Civit. Dei*, after Seneca.
[2] Lucret. i. 83.
[3] St. Paul, 1 *Corinth.* i. 25.
[4] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

keys and most secret springs of his power? Is he obliged not to exceed the limits of our knowledge? Put the case, O man! that thou hast been able here to mark some footsteps of his effects; dost thou therefore think that he has employed all he can, and has crowded all his forms and ideas in this work? Thou seest nothing but the order and revolution of this little cave in which thou art lodged, if, indeed, thou dost see so much; whereas his divinity has an infinite jurisdiction beyond. This part is nothing in comparison of the whole:—

Omnia cum cœlo, terrâque, marique,
Nil sunt ad summam summai totius omnem.[1]

"The earth, the sea, and skies, from pole to pole,
Are small, nay, nothing to the mighty WHOLE."

'Tis a municipal law that thou allegest, thou knowest not what is universal. Tie thyself to that to which thou art subject, but not him; he is not of thy brotherhood, thy fellow-citizen, or companion. If he has in some sort communicated himself unto thee, 'tis not to debase himself unto thy littleness, nor to make thee comptroller of his power; the human body cannot fly to the clouds; rules are for thee. The sun runs every day his ordinary course; the bounds of the sea and the earth cannot be confounded; the water is unstable and without firmness; a wall, unless it be broken, is impenetrable to a solid body; a man cannot preserve his life in the flames; he cannot be both in heaven and upon earth, and corporally in a thousand places at once. 'Tis for thee that he has made these rules; 'tis thee that they concern; he has manifested to Christians that he has enfranchised himself from them all when it pleased him. And, in truth, why, almighty as he is, should he have limited his power within any certain bounds? In favour of whom should he have renounced his privilege? Thy reason has in no other thing more of likelihood and foundation than in that wherein it persuades thee that there is a plurality of worlds:—

[1] Lucret. vi. 679.

Terramque et solem, lunam, mare, cætera quæ sunt,
Non esse unica, sed numero magis innumerali.[1]

"That earth, sun, moon, sea, and the rest that are,
Not single, but innumerable were."

The most eminent minds of elder times believed it; and some of this age of ours, compelled by the appearances of human reason, do the same; forasmuch as in this fabric that we behold there is nothing single and one,

The plurality of the worlds no new opinion.

Cum in summâ res nulla sit una,
Unica quæ gignatur, et unica solaque crescat;[2]

"Since nothing's single in this mighty place,
That can alone beget, alone increase;"

and that all the kinds are multiplied in some number; by which it seems not to be likely that God should have made this work only without a companion; and that the matter of this form should have been totally drained in this individual.

Quare etiam atque etiam tales fateare necesse est
Esse alios alibi congressus materiali;
Qualis hic est, avido complexu quem tenet æther.[3]

"Wherefore 'tis necessary to confess
That there must elsewhere be the like congress
Of the like matter, which the airy space
Holds fast within its infinite embrace."

Especially if it be a living creature, which its motions render so credible that Plato affirms it,[4] and that many of our people do either confirm, or dare not deny it; no more than that ancient opinion that the heavens, the stars, and other members of the world, are creatures composed of body and soul, mortal in respect of their composition, but immortal by the determination of the Creator. Now if there be many worlds, as Democritus, Epicurus, and almost all philosophy has believed, what do we know that the principles and rules of this

[1] Lucret. ii. 1085.
[2] Id. *ib.* 1077.
[3] Id. *ib.* 1064.
[4] In the *Timæus*.

of ours in like manner concern the rest? They may peradventure have another form and another polity. Epicurus[1] supposes them either like or unlike. We see in this world an infinite difference and variety, only by distance of places; neither corn, wine, nor any of our animals are to be seen in that new corner of the world discovered by our fathers; 'tis all there another thing; and in times past, do but consider in how many parts of the world they had no knowledge either of Bacchus or Ceres. If Pliny and Herodotus are to be believed, there are in certain places kinds of men very little resembling us,[2] mongrel and ambiguous forms, betwixt the human and brutal natures; there are countries where men are born without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breast; where they are all hermaphrodites; where they go on all four; where they have but one eye in the forehead, and a head more like a dog than like ours; where they are half fish the lower part, and live in the water; where the women bear at five years old, and live but eight; where the head and the skin of the forehead is so hard that a sword will not touch it, but rebounds again; where men have no beards; nations that know not the use of fire; others that eject seed of a black colour. What shall we say of those that naturally change themselves into wolves, colts, and then into men again? And if it be true, as Plutarch says,[3] that in some place of the Indies there are men without mouths, who nourish themselves with the smell of certain odours, how many of our descriptions are false? He is no longer risible, nor, perhaps, capable of reason and society. The disposition and cause of our internal composition would then for the most part be to no purpose, and of no use.

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.

[2] The following instances are taken from the 3d and 4th Books of Herodotus, and the 6th, 7th, and 8th of Pliny. But the larger portion of these traditions are stated doubtingly by both authors. Pliny expressly says that a person who can be persuaded that men were ever metamorphosed into wolves, and afterwards into men again, will be ready to give his credit to all the fables that have been invented for so many ages past; and having then quoted some stories of such pretended metamorphoses, cries out: "It is astonishing how far the Greeks have extended their credulity. There is no lie ever so impudent that wants a witness to prove it."—*Nat. Hist.* viii. 22.

[3] Plut. *On the Face of the Moon.* Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 7, 2.

Moreover, how many things are there in our own knowledge that oppose those fine rules we have cut out for and prescribe to nature? And yet we must undertake to circumscribe thereto God himself! How many things do we call miraculous, and contrary to nature? This is done by every nation, and by every man, according to the proportion of his ignorance. How many occult properties and quintessences do we daily discover? For, for us to go "according to nature," is no more but to go "according to our understanding," as far as that is able to follow, and as far as we are able to see into it; all beyond that is, forsooth, monstrous and irregular. Now, by this account, all things shall be monstrous to the wisest and most understanding men; for human reason has persuaded them that there was no manner of ground nor foundation, not so much as to be assured that snow is white, and Anaxagoras affirmed it to be black;[1] if there be any thing, or if there be nothing; if there be knowledge or ignorance, which Metrodorus of Chios denied that man was able to determine;[2] or whether we live, as Euripides doubts whether the life we live is life, or whether that we call death be not life:—

Many things in nature contrary to the rules we have prescribed to nature.

> Τίς δ' οἶδεν εἰ ζῆν τοῦθ', ὃ κέκληται θανεῖν,
> Τὸ ζῆν δὲ θνήσκειν ἐστί;[3]

and not without some appearance. For why do we derive the title of being from this instant, which is but a flash in the infinite course of an eternal night, and so short an interruption of our perpetual and natural condition, death possessing all the before and after this moment, and also a good part of the moment itself. Others swear there is no motion at all,[4] as

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* iv. 23 and 31. *Epist. ad Quint. frat.* Sextus Empiricus, *Hypoth. Pyrrhon.* i. 13. Galen, *de Simplic. Medic.* ii. 1, &c. A German named Voight, has also published a dissertation *Adversus alborem nivis.*

[2] Cicero. *Acad.* iv. 23. Sextus Empiricus, *Hypoth. Pyr.*

[3] Plato in his *Gorgias*, p. 300; Diog. Laert. *Life of Pyrrho*, ix. 73; and Sextus Empiricus, *Hypoth. Pyr.* iii. 24, quote these verses, differently from one another, and from what they are here, but there is no real difference in the sense.

[4] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

Motion of things below denied.

the followers of Melissus, and that nothing stirs. For if there be but one, neither can that spherical motion be of any use to him, nor motion from one place to another, as Plato proves: "That there is neither generation nor corruption in nature." Protagoras says [1] that there is nothing in nature but doubt; that a man may equally dispute of all things; and even of this, whether a man can equally dispute of all things; Nausiphanes,[2] that of things which seem to be, nothing is more than it is not; that there is nothing certain but uncertainty; Parmenides,[3] that of that which seems, there is no one thing in general; that there is but one thing; Zeno, that one same is not, and that there is nothing; if there were one thing, it would either be in another or in itself; if it be in another, they are two; if it be in itself, they are yet two; the comprehending, and the comprehended.[4] According to these doctrines the nature of things is no other than a shadow, either false or vain.

This way of speaking in a Christian man has ever seemed to me very indiscreet and irreverent. "God cannot die; God cannot contradict himself; God cannot do this or that." I do not like to have the divine power so limited by the laws of men's mouths; and the idea which presents itself to us in those propositions ought to be more religiously and reverently expressed.

Our speaking has its failings and defects, as well as all the rest. Most of the occasions of disturbance in the world are grammatical ones; our suits only spring from disputes as to

Human language very defective.

the interpretation of laws; and most wars proceed from the inability of ministers clearly to express the conventions and treaties of amity of princes. How many quarrels, and of how great importance, has the doubt of the meaning of this syllable, *hoc*, created in the world? [5] Let us take the clearest conclusion that logic itself

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 88.

[3] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* iii.; who elsewhere (*Acad.* iv. 27) attributes the saying to Xenophanes.

[4] Cicero, *Acad.* iv. 27. Seneca, *Epist.* 88.

[5] Montaigne here refers to the controversies between the Catholics and Protestants about transubstantiation.

presents us withal; if you say, "It is fine weather," and that you say true, it is then fine weather. Is not this a very certain form of speaking? And yet it will deceive us; that it will do so, let us follow the example: If you say, "I lie," if you say true, you do lie.[1] The art, the reason, and force of the conclusion of this, are the same with the other, and yet we are gravelled. The Pyrrhonian philosophers, I see, cannot express their general conception in any kind of speaking; for they would require a new language on purpose; ours is all formed of affirmative propositions, which are totally antarctic to them; insomuch that when they say "I doubt," they are presently taken by the throat, to make them confess that at least they know and are assured that they do doubt. By which means they have been compelled to shelter themselves under this medical comparison, without which their humour would be inexplicable: when they pronounce, "I know not," or, "I doubt," they say that this proposition carries off itself with the rest, no more nor less than rhubarb, that drives out the ill humours, and carries itself off with them.[2] This fancy will be more certainly understood by interrogation: "What do I know?" as I bear it with the emblem of a balance.

See what use they make of this irreverent way of speaking;[3] in the present disputes about our religion, if you press its adversaries too hard, they will roundly tell you, "that it is not in the power of God to make it so, that his body should be in paradise and upon earth, and in several places at once." And see, too, what advantage the old scoffer[4] made of this. "At least," says he, "it is no little consolation to man to see that God cannot do all things; for he cannot kill himself, though he would; which is the greatest privilege we have in our condition; he cannot make mortal immortal, nor revive the dead; nor make it so, that he who has lived has not; nor

[1] This is the sophistical dilemma called the liar. Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 29. *Aul. Gell.* xviii. 2.

[2] Laert. ix. 76.

[3] This refers to what was just said, that God cannot do this or that.

[4] Pliny, ii. 7; whom the author named in the first edition of the Essays; but in the edition of 1588, he scratched out "ce mocqueur de Pline," and substituted "ce mocqueur ancien."

that he who has had honours has not had them; having no other right to the past than that of oblivion." And that the comparison of man to God may yet be made out by jocose examples: "He cannot order it so," says he, "that twice ten shall not be twenty." This is what he says, and what a Christian ought to take heed shall not escape his lips. Whereas, on the contrary, it seems as if men studied this foolish daring of language, to reduce God to their own measure:—

Cras vel atrâ
Nube polum, Pater, occupato,
Vel sole puro; non tamen irritum
Quodcumque retro est efficiet, neque
Diffinget infectumque reddet
Quod fugiens semel hora vexit.[1]

"To-morrow, let it shine or rain,
Yet cannot this the past make vain:
Nor uncreate and render void
That which was yesterday enjoyed."

When we say that the infinity of ages, as well past as to come, are but one instant with God; that his goodness, wisdom, and power are the same with his essence; our mouths speak it, but our understandings apprehend it not; and yet, such is our vain opinion of ourselves, that we must make the Divinity to pass through our sieve; and thence proceed all the dreams and errors with which the world abounds, whilst we reduce and weigh in our balance a thing so far above our poise.[2] *Mirum quo procedat improbitas cordis humani, parvulo aliquo invitata successu.*[3] "'Tis wonderful to what the wickedness of man's heart will proceed, if elevated with the least success." How magisterially and insolently does Epicurus reprove the Stoics, for maintaining that the truly good and happy being appertained only to God, and that the wise man had nothing

[1] Horace, *Od.* iii. 29, 43.

[2] Montaigne in this passage somewhat contradicts the author whom he is defending. "L'homme," says Sebonde, in Montaigne's translation, c. 121, "est par sa nature, en tant qu'il est homme, la vraye et vive image de Dieu. Tout ainsi que le cachet engrave sa figure dans la cire, ainsi Dieu empreint en l'homme sa semblance," &c.

[3] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 23.

but a shadow and resemblance of it! How temerariously have they bound God to destiny (a thing which, by my consent, none that bears the name of a Christian shall ever do again)! and Thales, Plato, and Pythagoras have enslaved him to necessity. This arrogance of attempting to discover God with our eyes has been the cause that an eminent person among us [1] has attributed to the Divinity a corporal form; and is the reason of what happens to us every day, of attributing to God important events, by a particular assignment. Because they weigh with us, they conclude that they also weigh with him, and that he has a more intent and vigilant regard to them than to others of less moment to us or of ordinary course: *Magna Dii curant, parva negligunt:* [2] "The gods are concerned at great matters, but slight the small." Listen to him; he will clear this to you by his reason: *Nec in regnis quidem reges omnia minima curant:* [3] "Neither indeed do kings in their administration take notice of all the least concerns." As if to that King of kings it were more or less to subvert a kingdom, or to move the leaf of a tree; or as if his providence acted after another manner in inclining the event of a battle than in the leap of a flea. The hand of his government is laid upon every thing after the same manner, with the same power and order; our interest does nothing towards it; our inclinations and measures sway nothing with him. *Deus ita artifex magnus in magnis, ut minor non sit in parvis:* [4] "God is so great an artificer in great things, that he is no less in the least." Our arrogancy sets this blasphemous comparison ever before us. Because our employments are a burden to us, Strato has courteously been pleased to exempt the gods from all offices, as their priests are; he makes nature produce and support all things; and with her weights and motions make up the several parts of the world, discharging human nature from the awe of divine judgments: *Quod beatum æternumque sit, id nec*

[1] *Tertullian*, in the well-known passage, —*Quis negat Deum esse corpus, etsi Deus spiritus sit.*

[2] Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* ii. 66.

[3] Id. *ib.* iii. 35.

[4] St. August. *De Civit. Dei*, xi. 22.

habere negotii quicquam, nec exhibere alteri:[1] "What is blessed and eternal has neither any business itself nor gives any to another." Nature will that in like things there should be a like relation. The infinite number of mortals, therefore, concludes a like number of immortals; the infinite things that kill and destroy presupposes as many that preserve and profit. As the souls of the gods, without tongue, eye, or ear, do every one of them feel amongst themselves what the other feels, and judge our thoughts; so the souls of men, when at liberty and loosed from the body, either by sleep or some ecstacy, divine, foretell, and see things, which, whilst joined to the body, they could not see. "Men," says St. Paul, "professing themselves to be wise, they become fools; and change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man."[2] Do but take notice of the juggling in the ancient deifications. After the great and stately pomp of the funeral, so soon as the fire began to mount to the top of the pyramid, and to catch hold of the couch where the body lay, they at the same time turned out an eagle, which flying upward, signified that the soul went into Paradise.[3] We have a thousand medals, and particularly of the worthy Faustina, where this eagle is represented carrying these deified souls to heaven with their heels upwards. 'Tis pity that we should fool ourselves with our own fopperies and inventions,

Quod finxere, timent,

"They fear their own inventions,"[4]

like children who are frighted with the same face of their playfellow, that they themselves have smeared and smutted. *Quasi quicquam infelicius sit homine, cui sua figmenta dominantur:* "As if any thing could be more unhappy than man, who is insulted over by his own imagination." 'Tis far from honouring him who made us, to honour him that we

[1] Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* i. 17.
[2] *Rom.* i. 22.
[3] Herodian, iv.
[4] Lucan, i. 486.

have made. Augustus had more temples than Jupiter, served with as much religion and belief of miracles. The Thracians, in return of the benefits they had received from Agesilaus, came to bring him word that they had canonized him: "Has your nation," said he to them, "the power to make gods of whom they please? Pray first deify some one amongst yourselves, and when I shall see what advantage he has by it, I will thank you for your offer."[1] Man is certainly stark mad; he cannot make a worm, and yet he will be making gods by dozens. Hear Trismegistus in praise of our sufficiency: "Of all the wonderful things, it surmounts all wonder that man could find out the divine nature and make it."[2] And take here the arguments of the school of philosophy itself:—

> Nosse cui divos et cœli numina soli,
> Aut soli nescire, datum.[3]
>
> "To whom to know the deities of heaven,
> Or know he knows them not, alone 'tis given."

"If there is a God, he is a living creature;[4] if he be a living creature, he has sense; and if he has sense, he is subject to corruption. If he be without a body he is without a soul, and consequently without action; and if he has a body, it is perishable." Is not here a triumph? we are incapable of having made the world; there must then be some more excellent nature that has put a hand to the work. It were a foolish and ridiculous arrogance to esteem ourselves the most perfect thing of the universe. There must then be something that is better, and that must be God. When you see a stately and stupendous edifice, though you do not know who is the owner of it, you would yet conclude it was not built for rats. And this divine structure, that we behold of the celestial palace, have we not reason to believe that it is the residence of some possessor, who is much greater than we? Is not the most supreme always the most

Heaven God's palace.

[1] Plutarch, *Apoth. of the Lacedemonians.*
[2] Asclep. *Dialog. apud* L. Apuleium, vol. ii. p. 306, *Bipont.*
[3] Lucan, l. 452.
[4] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* iii. 13, ii. 6, &c.

worthy? but we are in the lowest form. Nothing without a soul and without reason can produce a living creature capable of reason. The world produces us, the world then has soul and reason. Every part of us is less than we. We are part of the world, the world therefore is endued with wisdom and reason, and that more abundantly than we. 'Tis a fine thing to have a great government; the government of the world then appertains to some happy nature. The stars do us no harm; they are then full of goodness. We have need of nourishment; then so have the gods also, and feed upon the vapours of the earth. Worldly goods are not goods to God; therefore they are not goods to us; offending and being offended are equally testimonies of imbecility; 'tis therefore folly to fear God. God is good by his nature; man by his industry, which is more. The divine and human wisdom have no other distinction, but that the first is eternal; but duration is no accession to wisdom, therefore we are companions. We have life, reason, and liberty; we esteem goodness, charity, and justice; these qualities are then in him. In conclusion, building and destroying, the conditions of the Divinity, are forged by man, according as they relate to himself. What a pattern, and what a model! let us stretch, let us raise and swell human qualities as much as we please; puff up thyself, poor man, yet more and more, and more:—

The government of the world.

Non, si tu ruperis, inquit.[1]

"Not if thou burst," said he.

Profecto non Deum, quem cogitare non possunt, sed semetipsos pro illo cogitantes, non illum, sed seipsos, non illi, sed sibi comparant.[2] "Certainly they do not imagine God, whom they cannot imagine; but they imagine themselves in his stead; they do not compare him, but themselves, not to him, but to themselves." In natural things the effects do but half relate to their causes. What's this to the purpose? His condition is above the order of nature, too elevated, too re-

[1] Horace, *Sat.* ii. 319.

[2] St. Augustin, *de Civ. Dei*, xii. c. 17.

mote, and too mighty, to permit itself to be bound and fettered by our conclusions. 'Tis not through ourselves that we arrive at that place; our ways lie too low. We are no nearer heaven on the top of Mount Cenis than at the bottom of the sea; take the distance with your astrolabe. They debase God even to the carnal knowledge of women, to so many times, and so many generations. Paulina, the wife of Saturninus, a matron of great reputation at Rome, thinking she lay with the god Serapis,[1] found herself in the arms of an amoroso of hers, through the panderism of the priests of his temple. Varro, the most subtle and most learned of all the Latin authors, in his book of theology, writes,[2] that the sexton of Hercules's temple, throwing dice with one hand for himself, and with the other for Hercules, played after that manner with him for a supper and a wench; if he won, at the expense of the offerings; if he lost, at his own. The sexton lost, and paid the supper and the wench. Her name was Laurentina, who saw by night this god in her arms, who moreover told her, that the first she met the next day, should give her a heavenly reward; which proved to be Taruncius,[3] a rich young man, who took her home to his house, and in time left her his inheritrix. She, in her turn, thinking to do a thing that would be pleasing to the god, left the people of Rome heirs to her; and therefore had divine honours attributed to her. As if it had not been sufficient that Plato was originally descended from the gods by a double line, and that he had Neptune for the common father of his race, it was certainly believed at Athens, that Aristo, having a mind to enjoy the fair Perictione, could not, and was warned by the god Apollo, in a dream, to leave her unpolluted and untouched, till she should first be brought to bed. These were the father and mother of Plato.[4] How many ridiculous

[1] Or Anubis, according to Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities*, xviii. 4, where this story is related at length.

[2] St. Augustin, *de Civit. Dei*, vi. 7.

[3] Or Tarutius, according to St. Augustin; but according to Plutarch, who relates the same story in the life of Romulus, the first man who met Larentia (as he calls her) was one Tarrutius, a very old man.

[4] Laertius, *in Vitâ*. Plutarch, *Table Talk*.

stories are there of like cuckoldings, committed by the gods against poor mortal men! And how many husbands injuriously scandaled in favour of the children! In the Mahometan religion there are Merlins enough found by the belief of the people; that is to say, children without fathers, spiritual, divinely conceived in the wombs of virgins, and carry names that signify so much in their language.

Nothing that both man and beast is fonder of than its species.

We are to observe that to every thing nothing is more dear and estimable than its being (the lion, the eagle, the dolphin, prize nothing above their own kind); and that every thing assimilates the qualities of all other things to its own proper qualities, which we may indeed extend or contract, but that's all; for beyond that relation and principle our imagination cannot go, can guess at nothing else, nor possibly go out thence, nor stretch beyond it; whence spring these ancient conclusions: of all forms the most beautiful is that of man; therefore God must be of that form. No one can be happy without virtue, nor virtue be without reason, and reason cannot inhabit anywhere but in a human shape; God is therefore clothed in a human figure. *Ita est informatum et anticipatum mentibus nostris, ut homini, quum de Deo cogitet, forma occurrat humana.*[1] "It is so imprinted in our minds, and the fancy is so prepossessed with it, that when a man thinks of God, a human figure ever presents itself to the imagination." Therefore it was that Xenophanes pleasantly said, "That if beasts frame any gods to themselves, as 'tis likely they do, they make them certainly such as themselves are, and glorify themselves in it, as we do. For why may not a goose say thus; "All the parts of the universe I have an interest in; the earth serves me to walk upon; the sun to light me; the stars have their influence upon me; I have such an advantage by the winds and such by the waters; there is nothing that yon heavenly roof looks upon so favourably as me; I am the darling of nature! Is it not man that keeps, lodges,

[1] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* i. 27.

and serves me? 'Tis for me that he both sows and grinds; if he eats me he does the same by his fellow-men, and so do I the worms that kill and devour him."[1] As much might be said by a crane, and with greater confidence, upon the account of the liberty of his flight, and the possession of that high and beautiful region. *Tam blanda conciliatrix, et tam sui est lena ipsa natura.*[2] "So flattering and wheedling a bawd is nature to herself."[3]

Now by the same consequence, the destinies are then for us; for us the world; it shines, it thunders for us; creator and creatures, all are for us; 'tis the mark and point to which the universality of things aims. Look into the records that philosophy has kept for two thousand years and more, of the affairs of heaven; the gods all that while have neither acted nor spoken but for man. She does not allow them any other consultation or occupation. See them here against us in war:— Man imagines all things were made for him.

Domitosque Herculeâ manu
Telluris juvenes, unde periculum
Fulgens contremuit domus
Saturni veteris.[4]

"The brawny sons of earth, subdu'd by hand
Of Hercules on the Phlegræan strand,
Where the rude shock did such an uproar make,
As made old Saturn's sparkling palace shake."

And here you shall see them participate of our troubles, to make a return for our having so often shared in theirs:—

Neptunus muros, magnoque emota tridenti
Fundamenta quatit, totamque à sedibus urbem
Eruit: hic Juno Scæas sævissima portas
Prima tenet.[5]

[1] Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* xiii. 13.

[2] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* i. 27.

[3] Here Montaigne is again in contradiction with him whose apology he is writing. Sebond, in our author's translation of his work says: "Le ciel te dit (à l'homme)—Je te fournis de lumière le jour, afin que tu veilles; d'ombre la nuit àfin que tu dormes et repose; pour ta récréation et commodité, je renouvelle les saisons, je te donne la fleurissante douceur du printems, la chaleur de l'été la fertilité de l'automne, les froideurs de l'hiver . . l'air—je te communique la respiration vitale, et offre à ton obeissance tout le genre de mes oiseaux; l'eau—je te fournis de quoi boire, de quoi te laver. La terre—je te soutiens; tu as de moi le pain de quoi se nourissent tes forces, le vin de quoi tu esjouis tes esprits," &c.

[4] Horace, *Od.* ii. 12. 6.

[5] *Æneid*, ii. 610.

"Amidst that smother Neptune holds his place,
Below the walls' foundation drives his mace,
And heaves the city from its solid base.
See where in arms the cruel Juno stands,
Full in the Scæan gate."

The Caunians, jealous of the authority of their own proper gods, armed themselves on the days of their devotion, and through the whole of their precincts ran cutting and slashing the air with their swords, by that means to drive away and banish all foreign gods out of their territory.[1] Their powers are limited according to our necessity; this cures horses, that men, that the plague, that the scurf, that the phthisic; one cures one sort of itch, another another: *Adeo minimis etiam rebus prava religio inserit Deos.*[2] "At such a rate does false religion create gods for the most contemptible uses." This one makes grapes grow, that onions; this has the presidence over lechery, that over merchandise; for every sort of artisan a god; this has his province and reputation in the east; that his in the west:—

Power of the gods limited to certain things.

Hic illius arma,
Hic currus fuit.[3]

"Here lay her armour, here her chariot stood."

O sancte Apollo, qui umbilicum certum terrarum obtines![4]

"O sacred Phœbus, who with glorious ray,
From the earth's centre, dost thy light display."

Pallada Cecropidæ, Minoïa Creta Dianam,
Vulcanum tellus Hypsipylea colit,
Junonem Sparte, Pelopeïadesque Mycenæ;
Pinigerum Fauni Mænalis ora caput;
Mars Latio venerandus.[5]

"Th' Athenians Pallas, Cynthia Crete adore,
Vulcan is worshipped on the Lemnian shore.
Proud Juno's altars are by Spartans fed,
Th' Arcadians worship Faunus, and 'tis said
To Mars, by Italy, is homage paid."

[1] Herod. i. 172.
[2] Livy, xxvii. 23.
[3] *Æneid*, i. 16.
[4] Cicero, *de Divin.* ii. 56. Delphi was considered the navel, or centre of the earth; δελφὺς, *uterus*. See Livy, xxxviii. 48; Ovid, *Met.* x. 168, &c.
[5] Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 81.

This has only one town or family in his possession; that lives alone; that in company, either voluntary or upon necessity:—

Junctaque sunt magno templa nepotis avo.[1]

"And temples to the nephew joined are,
To those were reared to the great-grandfather."

There are some so wretched and mean (for the number amounts to six and thirty thousand[2]) that they must pack five or six together, to produce one ear of corn, and thence take their several names; three to a door—that of the plank, that of the hinge, and that of the threshold. Four to a child—protectors of his swathing-clouts, his drink, meat, and sucking. Some certain, some uncertain and doubtful, and some that are not yet entered Paradise:—

Quos, quoniam cœli nondum dignamur honore,
Quas dedimus certè terras habitare sinamus:[3]

"Whom, since we yet not worthy think of heaven,
We suffer to possess the earth we've given."

There are amongst them physicians, poets, and civilians. Some of a mean betwixt the divine and human nature; mediators betwixt God and us, adorned with a certain second and diminutive sort of adoration; infinite in titles and offices; some good; others ill; some old and decrepit, and some that are mortal. For Chrysippus[4] was of opinion that in the last conflagration of the world all the gods were to die but Jupiter. Man makes a thousand pretty societies betwixt God and him; is he not his countryman?

Jovis incunabula Creten.[5]

"Crete, the cradle of Jupiter."

And this is the excuse that, upon consideration of this subject, Scævola, a high priest, and Varro, a great theologian in their times, make us: "That it is necessary that the people should

[1] Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 3, 294.
[2] Hesiod says only 30,000. Maximus Tyrius (*Dissert.* i.) says the number is infinite.
[3] Ovid. *Metam.* i. 6, 32.
[4] Plutarch, *on the Common Conceptions, &c.*
[5] Ovid, *Metam.* viii. 99.

be ignorant of many things that are true, and believe many things that are false." *Quum veritatem quâ liberetur inquirat, credatur ei expedire quod fallitur.*[1] "Seeing he inquires into the truth, by which he would be made free, 'tis fit he should be deceived." Human eyes cannot perceive things but by the forms they know; and we do not remember what a leap miserable Phaeton took for attempting to guide his father's horses with a mortal hand. The mind of man falls into as great a depth, and is after the same manner bruised and shattered by his own rashness. If you ask of philosophy of what matter the heavens and the sun are? what answer will she return, if not that it is iron, or, with Anaxagoras,[2] stone, or some other matter that she makes use of? If a man inquire of Zeno what nature is? "A fire," says he, "an artisan, proper for generation, and regularly proceeding." Archimedes, master of that science which attributes to itself the precedency before all others for truth and certainty; "the sun," says he, "is a god of red-hot iron." Was not this a fine imagination, extracted from the inevitable necessity of geometrical demonstrations? Yet not so inevitable and useful but that Socrates[3] thought it was enough to know so much of geometry only as to measure the land a man bought or sold; and that Polyænus,[4] who had been a great and famous doctor in it, despised it, as full of falsity and manifest vanity, after he had once tasted the delicate fruits of the lozelly gardens of Epicurus. Socrates in Xenophon,[5] concerning this affair, says of Anaxagoras, reputed by antiquity learned above all others in celestial and divine matters, "That he had cracked his brain, as all other men do who too immoderately search into knowledges which nothing belong to them:" when he made the sun to be a burning stone, he did not consider that a stone does not

Geometry how far useful.

[1] St. Augus. *De Civit. Dei*, iv. 27. Montesquieu, in his *Policy of the Romans in Religion*, cites the opinion of Scævola and Varro, nearly in the same terms as Montaigne, and adds, "St. Augustine says that Varro has here discovered the whole secret of politicians and ministers of state."

[2] Cic. *de Nat. Deor.* ii. c. 22.

[3] Xenophon, *On Socrates.*

[4] Cicero, *Acad.* iv. 38.

[5] Xenophon, *On Socrates*, iv. 7, 2.

shine in the fire; and, which is worse, that it will there consume; and in making the sun and fire one, that fire does not turn the complexions black in shining upon them; that we are able to look fixedly upon fire; and that fire kills herbs and plants. 'Tis Socrates's opinion, and mine too, that the best judging of heaven is not to judge of it at all. Plato having occasion, in his *Timæus*, to speak of the demons, "This undertaking," says he, "exceeds my ability." We are therefore to believe those ancients who said they were begotten by them; 'tis against all reason to refuse a man's faith to the children of the gods, though what they say should not be proved by any necessary or probable reasons; seeing they engage to speak of domestic and familiar things.

The sum of our knowledge of natural things.

Let us see if we have a little more light in the knowledge of human and natural things. Is it not a ridiculous attempt for us to forge for those to whom, by our own confession, our knowledge is not able to attain, another body, and to lend a false form of our own invention; as is manifest in this motion of the planets; to which, seeing our wits cannot possibly arrive, nor conceive their natural conduct, we lend them material, heavy, and substantial springs of our own by which to move:—

> Temo aureus, aurea summæ
> Curvatura rotæ, radiorum argenteus ordo.[1]
>
> "Gold was the axle, and the beam was gold;
> The wheels with silver spokes on golden circles roll'd."

You would say that we had had coachmakers, carpenters, and painters, that went up on high to make engines of various motions, and to range the wheelwork and interlacings of the heavenly bodies of differing colours about the axis of necessity, according to Plato:— [2]

> Mundus domus est maxima rerum,
> Quam quinque altitonæ fragmine zonæ
> Cingunt, per quam limbus pictus bis sex signis

[1] Ovid, *Metam.* ii. 107.

[2] Republic, x. 12.

Stellimicantibus, altus in obliquo æthere, lunæ
Bigas acceptat.[1]

"The world 's a mansion that doth all things hold,
Which thundering zones, in number five, enfold,
Through which a girdle, painted with twelve signs,
And that with sparkling constellations, shines,
In heaven's arch marks the diurnal course
For the sun's chariot and his fiery horse."

These are all dreams and fanatic follies. Why will not nature please for once to lay open her bosom to us, and plainly discover to us the means and conduct of her movements, and prepare our eyes to see them? Good God, what abuse, what mistakes should we discover in our poor science! I am mistaken if that weak knowledge of ours holds any one thing as it really is, and I shall depart hence more ignorant of all other things than my own ignorance.

Have I not read in Plato this divine saying, that "nature is nothing but an enigmatic poesy!"[2] As if a man might perhaps see a veiled and shady picture, breaking out here and there with an infinite variety of false lights to puzzle our conjectures: *Latent ista omnia crassis occultata et circumfusa tenebris; ut nulla acies humani ingenii tanta sit, quæ penetrare in cœlum, terram intrare, possit.*[3] "All those things lie concealed and involved in so dark an obscurity that no point of human wit can be so sharp as to pierce heaven or penetrate the earth." And certainly philosophy is no other than sophisticated poetry. Whence do the ancient writers extract their authorities but from the poets? and the first of them were poets themselves, and writ accordingly. Plato is but a poet unripped. Timon[4] calls him, insultingly, "a monstrous forger of miracles." All superhuman sciences make use of

Philosophy is only poetry sophisticated.

[1] Varro, *apud Val. Prob. not. in Virgil, Eclog.* the text has in the first verse *maxima homulli;* and in the last, *bigas solisque receptat.*

[2] Montaigne has here mistaken Plato's sense, whose words, in the second Alcibiades, ii. are:—"Ἐστι τε φύσει ποιητικὴ ἡ ξύμπασα αἰνιγματώδης;"—"All poetry is in its nature enigmatical." Plato says this by reason of a verse in Homer's *Margites*, which he explains, and which indeed has something in it that is enigmatical.

[3] Cicero, *Acad.* iv. 39.

[4] Timon the sillographist. See Laertius, *Life of Plato.*

the poetic style. Just as women make use of teeth of ivory where the natural are wanting, and instead of their true complexion make one of some artificial matter; as they stuff themselves out with cotton to appear plump, and in the sight of every one do paint, patch, and trick up themselves with a false and borrowed beauty; so does science (and even our law itself has, they say, legitimate fictions, whereon it builds the truth of its justice); she gives us in presupposition, and for current pay, things which she herself informs us were invented; for these *epicycles*, *eccentrics*, and *concentrics*, which astrology makes use of to carry on the motions of the stars, she gives us for the best she could invent upon that subject; as also, in all the rest, philosophy presents us not that which really is, or what she really believes, but what she has contrived with the greatest and most plausible likelihood of truth, and the quaintest invention. Plato,[1] upon the discourse of the state of human bodies and those of beasts, says, "I should know that what I have said is truth, had I the confirmation of an oracle; but this I will affirm, that what I have said is the most likely to be true of any thing I could say."

'Tis not to heaven only that art sends her ropes, engines, and wheels; let us consider a little what she says of us ourselves, and of our contexture. There is not more retrogradation, trepidation, accession, recession, and astonishment, in the stars and celestial bodies, than they have found out in this poor little human body. In earnest, they have good reason, upon that very account, to call it the little world, so many tools and parts have they employed to erect and build it. To assist the motions they see in man, and the various functions that we find in ourselves, in how many parts have they divided the soul, in how many places lodged it? in how many orders have they divided, and to how many stories have they raised this poor creature, man, besides those that are natural and to be perceived? And how many offices and vocations have

The confused idea which man has of himself.

[1] In the *Timæus*.

they assigned him? They make it an imaginary public thing. 'Tis a subject that they hold and handle; and they have full power granted to them to rip, place, displace, piece, and stuff it, every one according to his own fancy, and yet they possess it not. They cannot, not in reality only, but even in dreams, so govern it that there will not be some cadence or sound that will escape their architecture, as enormous as it is, and botched with a thousand false and fantastic patches. And it is not reason to excuse them; for though we are satisfied with painters when they paint heaven, earth, seas, mountains, and remote islands, that they give us some slight mark of them, and, as of things unknown, are content with a faint and obscure description; yet when they come and draw us after life, or any other creature which is known and familiar to us, we then require of them a perfect and exact representation of lineaments and colours, and despise them if they fail in it.

I am very well pleased with the Milesian girl,[1] who observing the philosopher Thales to be always contemplating the celestial arch, and to have his eyes ever gazing upward, laid something in his way that he might stumble over, to put him in mind that it would be time to take up his thoughts about things that are in the clouds when he had provided for those that were under his feet. Doubtless she advised him well, rather to look to himself than to gaze at heaven; for, as Democritus says, by the mouth of Cicero,—

Quod est ante pedes, nemo spectat: cœli scrutantur plagas.[2]

"No man regards what is under his feet; they are always prying towards heaven."

But our condition will have it so, that the knowledge of what we have in hand is as remote from us, and as much above the

[1] She was not a Milesian, but a Thracian, according to Plato, from whose *Theætetus* this story is taken; but he does not say that he stumbled at any thing laid in his way by his servant; but that as he was walking along, with his eyes lifted up to the stars he fell into a well.

[2] This Latin verse, extracted from a tragedy called *Iphigenia*, is not put by Cicero into the mouth of Democritus, but is directed against him. *De Divinat.* ii. 13.

clouds, as that of the stars. As Socrates says, in Plato,[1] "That whoever meddles with philosophy may be reproached as Thales was by the woman, that he sees nothing of that which is before him. For every philosopher is ignorant of what his neighbour does; aye, and of what he does himself, and is ignorant of what they both are, whether beasts or men."

Those people, who find Sebond's arguments too weak, that are ignorant of nothing, that govern the world, that know all,—

> Quæ mare compescant causæ; quid temperet annum;
> Stellæ sponte suâ, jussæve, vagentur et errent;
> Quid premat obscurum lunæ, quid proferat orbem;
> Quid velit et possit rerum concordia discors;[2]
>
> "What governs ocean's tides,
> And through the various year the seasons guides;
> Whether the stars by their own proper force,
> Or foreign power, pursue their wand'ring course;
> Why shadows darken the pale queen of night;
> Whence she renews her orb and spreads her light;—
> What nature's jarring sympathy can mean;"

have they not sometimes in their writings sounded the difficulties they have met with of knowing their own being? We see very well that the finger moves, that the foot moves, that some parts assume a voluntary motion of themselves without our consent, and that others work by our direction; that one sort of apprehension occasions blushing; another paleness; such an imagination works upon the spleen only, another upon the brain; one occasions laughter, another tears; another stupefies and astonishes all our senses, and arrests the motion of all our members; at one object the stomach will rise, at another a member that lies something lower; but how a spiritual impression should make such a breach into a massy and solid subject, and the nature of the connection and contexture of these admirable springs and movements, never yet man knew: *Omnia incerta ratione, et in naturæ majestate abdita.* "All uncertain in reason, and concealed in the

[1] *Theætetus.* [2] Horace, *Epist.* i. 12, 16.

majesty of nature," says Pliny.[1] And St. Augustin,[2] *Modus quo corporibus adhærent spiritus . . . . omnino mirus est, nec comprehendi ab homine potest; et hoc ipse homo est.* "The manner whereby souls adhere to bodies is altogether wonderful, and cannot be conceived by man, and yet this is man." And yet it is not so much as doubted; for the opinions of men are received according to the ancient belief, by authority and upon trust, as if it were religion and law. 'Tis received as gibberish which is commonly spoken; this truth, with all its clutter of arguments and proofs, is admitted as a firm and solid body, that is no more to be shaken, no more to be judged of; on the contrary, every one, according to the best of his talent, corroborates and fortifies this received belief with the utmost power of his reason, which is a supple utensil, pliable, and to be accommodated to any figure; and thus the world comes to be filled with lies and fopperies.

How it happens that men scarce doubt of things.

The reason that men doubt of divers things is that they never examine common impressions; they do not dig to the root, where the faults and defects lie; they only debate upon the branches; they do not examine whether such and such a thing be true, but if it has been so and so understood; it is not inquired into whether Galen has said any thing to purpose, but whether he has said so or so. In truth it was very good reason that this curb to the liberty of our judgments and that tyranny over our opinions, should be extended to the schools and arts. The god of scholastic knowledge is Aristotle; 'tis irreligion to question any of his decrees, as it was those of Lucurgus at Sparta; his doctrine is a magisterial law, which, peradventure, is as false as another. I do not know why I should not as willingly embrace either the ideas of Plato, or the atoms of Epicurus, or the plenum or vacuum of Leucippus and Democritus, or the water of Thales, or the infinity of nature of Anaximander, or the air of Diogenes,[3] or the numbers and

[1] *Nat. Hist.* ii. 37.
[2] *De Civit. Dei*, xxi. 10.
[3] Of Apollonia. Sextus Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypot.* iii. 4.

symmetry of Pythagoras, or the infinity of Parmenides, or the One of Musæus, or the water and fire of Apollodorus, or the similar parts of Anaxagoras, or the discord and friendship of Empedocles, or the fire of Heraclitus, or any other opinion of that infinite confusion of opinions and determinations, which this fine human reason produces by its certitude and clear-sightedness in every thing it meddles withal, as I should the opinion of Aristotle upon this subject of the principles of natural things; which principles he builds of three pieces—matter, form, and privation. And what can be more vain than to make inanity itself the cause of the production of things? Privation is a negative; of what humour could he then make the cause and original of things that are? And yet that were not to be controverted but for the exercise of logic; there is nothing disputed therein to bring it into doubt, but to defend the author of the school from foreign objections; his authority is the non-ultra, beyond which it is not permitted to inquire.

The receiving of principles without examination liable to all kind of mistakes.

It is very easy, upon approved foundations, to build whatever we please; for, according to the law and ordering of this beginning, the other parts of the structure are easily carried on without any failure. By this way we find our reason well-grounded, and discourse at a venture; for our masters prepossess and gain beforehand as much room in our belief as is necessary towards concluding afterwards what they please, as geometricians do by their granted demands, the consent and approbation we allow them giving them wherewith to draw us to the right and left, and to whirl us about at their pleasure. Whatever springs from these presuppositions is our master and our God; he will take the level of his foundations so ample and so easy that by them he may mount us up to the clouds, if he so please. In this practice and negotiation of science we have taken the saying of Pythagoras, "That every expert person ought to be believed in his own art" for current pay. The logician refers the signification

of words to the grammarians; the rhetorician borrows the state of arguments from the logician; the poet his measure from the musician: the geometrician his proportions from the arithmetician, and the metaphysicians take physical conjectures for their foundations; for every science has its principle presupposed, by which human judgment is everywhere kept in check. If you come to rush against the bar where the principal error lies, they have presently this sentence in their mouths, "That there is no disputing with persons who deny principles." Now men can have no principles if not revealed to them by the divinity; of all the rest the beginning, the middle, and the end, is nothing but dream and vapour. To those that contend upon presupposition we must, on the contrary, presuppose to them the same axiom upon which the dispute is. For every human presupposition and declaration has as much authority one as another, if reason do not make the difference. Wherefore they are all to be put into the balance, and first the generals and those that tyrannize over us. The persuasion of certainty is a certain testimony of folly and extreme incertainty; and there are not a more foolish sort of men, nor that are less philosophers, than the Philodoxes[1] of Plato; we must inquire whether fire be hot? whether snow be white? if there be any such things as hard or soft within our knowledge?

Whether philosophical uncertainty is determinable by the experience of the senses.

And as to those answers of which they make old stories, as he that doubted if there was any such thing as heat, whom they bid throw himself into the fire; and he that denied the coldness of ice, whom they bid to put ice into his bosom;— they are pitiful things, unworthy of the profession of philosophy. If they had let us alone in our natural being, to receive the appearance of things without us, according as they present themselves to us by our senses, and had permitted us

1 "Persons who are possessed with opinions of which they know not the grounds; whose heads are intoxicated with words; who see and affect only the appearances of things." This definition is taken from Plato, who has characterized them very particularly at the end of the fifth book of his *Republic*.

to follow our own natural appetites, governed by the condition of our birth, they might then have reason to talk at that rate; but 'tis from them we have learned to make ourselves judges of the world; 'tis from them that we derive this fancy, "That human reason is controller-general of all that is without and within the roof of heaven; that comprehends every thing, that can do every thing; by the means of which every thing is known and understood." This answer would be good among the cannibals, who enjoy the happiness of a long, quiet, and peaceable life, without Aristotle's precepts, and without the knowledge of the name of physics; this answer would perhaps be of more value and greater force than all those they borrow from their reason and invention; of this all animals, and all where the power of the law of nature is yet pure and simple, would be as capable as we, but as for them they have renounced it. They need not tell us, "It is true, for you see and feel it to be so;" they must tell me whether I really feel what I think I do; and if I do feel it, they must then tell me why I feel it, and how, and what; let them tell me the name, original, the parts and junctures of heat and cold, the qualities of the agent and patient; or let them give up their profession, which is not to admit or approve of any thing but by the way of reason; that is their test in all sorts of essays; but, certainly, 'tis a test full of falsity, error, weakness, and defect.

Which way can we better prove it than by itself? If we are not to believe her when speaking of herself, she can hardly be thought fit to judge of foreign things; if she know any thing, it must at least be her own being and abode; she is in the soul, and either a part or an effect of it; for true and essential reason, from which we by a false colour borrow the name, is lodged in the bosom of the Almighty; there is her habitation and recess; 'tis thence that she imparts her rays, when God is pleased to impart any beam of it to mankind, as Pallas issued from her father's head, to communicate herself to the world.

What reason tells us of the nature of the soul.

Now let us see what human reason tells us of herself and of the soul; not of the soul in general, of which almost all philosophy makes the celestial and first bodies participants; nor of that which Thales[1] attributed to things which themselves are reputed inanimate, lead thereto by the consideration of the loadstone; but of that which appertains to us, and that we ought the best to know:—

> Ignoratur enim, quæ sit natura animai;
> Nata sit; an, contra, nascentibus insinuetur;
> Et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta;
> An tenebras Orci visat, vastasque lacunas,
> An pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se.[2]

> "For none the nature of the soul doth know,
> Whether that it be born with us, or no;
> Or be infused into us at our birth,
> And dies with us when we return to earth,
> Or then descends to the black shades below,
> Or into other animals does go."

Crates and Dicæarchus were of opinion that there was no soul at all, but that the body thus stirs by a natural motion; Plato,[3] that it was a substance moving of itself; Thales, a nature without repose;[4] Asclepiades, an exercising of the senses; Hesiod and Anaximander, a thing composed of earth and water; Parmenides,[5] of earth and fire; Empedocles,[6] of blood:—

> Sanguineam vomit ille animam;[7]
>
> "He vomits up his bloody soul."

Posidonius,[8] Cleanthes, and Galen,[9] that it was heat or a hot complexion:—

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.
[2] Lucret. i. 113.
[3] *Laws*, x.
[4] Thales added. "and which moves of itself." Plutarch, *On the Opinions of the Philosophers*, who also gives the opinion of the physician Asclepiades, συγγυμασίαν τῶν αἰσθησέων.
[5] Macrob. *in Somn. Scip.* i. 14.
[6] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 9.
[7] *Æneid*, ix. 349.
[8] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.
[9] See Galen, *Quod animi mores sequantur corporis temperamentum*; but elsewhere this physician repeatedly declares that he cannot venture to affirm any thing as to the nature of the soul. See Nemesius, *de Naturâ Hominis*, c. 2, &c.

Igneus est ollis vigor, et cœlestis origo;[1]
"Their vigour of fire and of heavenly race."

Hippocrates,[2] a spirit diffused all over the body; Varro,[3] that it was an air received at the mouth, heated in the lungs, moistened in the heart, and diffused throughout the whole body; Zeno, the quintessence of the four elements;[4] Heraclides Ponticus,[5] that it was the light; Zenocrates and the Egyptians,[6] a mobile number; the Chaldeans, a virtue without any determinate form:—

Habitum quemdam vitalem corporis esse,
Harmoniam Græci quam dicunt.[7]

"A certain vital habit in man's frame,
Which harmony the Grecian sages name."

Let us not forget Aristotle, who held the soul to be that which naturally causes the body to move, which he calls entelechia,[8] with as cold an invention as any of the rest; for he neither speaks of the essence, nor of the original, nor of the nature of the soul, but only takes notice of the effect. Lactantius,[9] Seneca,[10] and most of the Dogmatists, have confessed that it was a thing they did not understand; after all this enumeration of opinions, *Harum sententiarum quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis viderit:*[11] "Of these opinions which is the true, let some god determine," says Cicero. "I know by myself," says St. Bernard,[12] "how incomprehensible God is, seeing I cannot comprehend the parts of my own being."

[1] *Æneid*, vi. 730.
[2] Macrob. *in Somn. Scip.* i. 14.
[3] Lactant. *De Opif. Dei.* c. 17.
[4] "I know not," says Mr. Coste, "where Montaigne had this; for Cicero expressly says that this quintessence, or fifth nature is a thought of Aristotle, who makes the soul to be composed of it; and that Zeno thought the soul to be fire," Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 9. After this, Cicero adds, "that Aristotle calls the mind, which he derives from that fifth nature entelechia, a new-coined word, signifying a perpetual motion." Though Montaigne has copied these last words, in what he proceeds to tell us of Aristotle, he censures him for not having spoken of the origin and nature of the soul. But had he only cast his eye upon what Cicero had said a little before, he would have been convinced that Aristotle had taken care to explain himself concerning the origin of the soul, before he remarked the effect of it. If he has not thereby fully demonstrated what the nature of it is, Zeno has not given us much better light into it when he says, "the soul or mind seems to be fire;" and it would not be difficult to show that in this article the other philosophers have not succeeded better than Zeno and Aristotle.
[5] *Stob. Eclog. Phys.* i. 40.
[6] Macrob. *ut supra.*
[7] Lucret. iii. 100.
[8] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 10.
[9] *De Opif. Dei.* c. 17.
[10] *Nat. Quæs.* vii. 14.
[11] *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 11.
[12] *Lib. de Anima.* c. 1

Heraclitus,[1] who was of opinion that every being was full of souls and demons, did nevertheless maintain that no one could advance so far towards the knowledge of the soul as ever to arrive at it; so profound was the essence of it.

In what part of man the soul resides.

Neither is there less controversy and debate about seating of it. Hippocrates and Hierophilus [2] place it in the ventricle of the brain; Democritus and Aristotle [3] throughout the whole body;—

> Ut bona sæpe valetudo cum dicitur esse
> Corporis, et non est tamen hæc pars ulla valentis;[4]
>
> "As when the body's health they do it call,
> When of a sound man, that's no part at all."

Epicurus in the stomach;

> Hic exsultat enim pavor ac metus; hæc loca circum
> Lætitiæ mulcent.[5]
>
> "For this the seat of horror is and fear,
> And joys in turn do likewise triumph here."

The Stoics,[6] about and within the heart; Erasistratus,[7] adjoining the membrane of the epicranium; Empedocles,[8] in the blood; as also Moses,[9] which was the reason why he interdicted eating the blood of beasts, because the soul is there seated; Galen thought that every part of the body had its soul; Strato [10] has placed it betwixt the eyebrows; *Quâ facie quidem sit animus, aut ubi habitet, ne quærendum quidem est:* [11] "What figure the soul is of, or what part it inhabits, is not to be inquired into," says Cicero. I very willingly deliver this author to you in his own words; for should I alter eloquence itself? Besides, it were but a poor prize to steal the matter of his inventions; they are neither very frequent, nor of any great weight, and sufficiently known. But the reason why Chrysippus argues it to be about the heart, as all the rest of that sect do, is not to be omitted;

1 Laertius, *in Vitâ.*
2 Plutarch, *On the Opinions of the Philosophers*, iv. 5.
3 Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.*
4 Lucret. iii. 108.
5 Id. *ib.* 142.
6 Plutarch, *ut supra.*
7 Id. *ib.*
8 Id. *ib.*
9 *Genesis*, ix. 4. *Levit.* vii. 26.
10 Plutarch, *ut supra.*
11 *Tusc Quæs.* i. 28

"It is," says he,[1] "because when we would affirm any thing, we lay our hand upon our breasts; and when we would pronounce ἐγὼ, which signifies I, we let the lower jaw fall towards the stomach." This place ought not to be passed over without a remark upon the vanity of so great a man; for besides that these considerations are infinitely light in themselves, the last is only a proof to the Greeks that they have their souls lodged in that part. No human judgment is so sprightly and vigilant that it does not sometimes sleep. Why do we fear to say? The Stoics,[2] the fathers of human prudence, think that the soul of a man, crushed under a ruin, long labours and strives to get out, like a mouse caught in a trap, before it can disengage itself from the burden. Some hold that the world was made to give bodies, by way of punishment, to the spirits fallen, by their own fault, from the purity wherein they had been created, the first creation having been incorporeal; and that, according as they are more or less depraved from their spirituality, so are they more or less jocundly or dully incorporated; and that thence proceeds all the variety of so much created matter. But the spirit that for his punishment was invested with the body of the sun must certainly have a very rare and particular measure of change.

The vanity of philosophical inquiries.

The extremities of our perquisition do all fall into astonishment and blindness; as Plutarch says[3] of the testimony of histories, that, according to charts and maps, the utmost bounds of known countries are taken up with marshes, impenetrable forests, deserts, and uninhabitable places; this is the reason why the most gross and childish ravings were most found in those authors who treat of the most elevated subjects, and proceed the furthest in them, losing themselves in their own curiosity and presumption. The beginning and end of knowledge are equally foolish; observe to what a pitch Plato flies in his

[1] Gal. *On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato*, c. 2.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 57.

[3] *Life of Theseus.*

poetic clouds; do but take notice there of the gibberish of the gods; but what did he dream of when he defined a man to be "a two-legged animal without feathers:[1] giving those who had a mind to deride him a pleasant occasion; for, having pulled a capon alive, they went about calling it "the man of Plato."

The atoms of the Epicureans, what?

And what did the Epicureans think of, out of what simplicity did they first imagine that their *atoms* that they said were bodies having some weight, and a natural motion downwards, had made the world; till they were put in mind, by their adversaries, that, according to this description, it was impossible they should unite and join to one another, their fall being so direct and perpendicular, and making so many parallel lines throughout? Wherefore there was a necessity that they should since add a fortuitous and sideways motion, and that they should moreover accoutre their atoms with hooked tails, by which they might unite and cling to one another. And even then do not those that attack them upon this second consideration put them hardly to it? "If the atoms have by chance formed so many sorts of figures, why did it never fall out that they made a house or a shoe? Why at the same rate should we not believe that an infinite number of Greek letters, strewed all over a certain place, might fall into the contexture of the *Iliad*?"[2]—"Whatever is capable of reason," says Zeno,[3] "is better than that which is not capable; there is nothing better than the world; the world is therefore capable of reason."[4] Cotta, by this way of argumentation, makes the world a mathematician; 'and tis also made a musician and an organist by this other argumentation of Zeno: "The whole is more than a part; we are capable of wisdom, and are part of the world; therefore the world is wise." There are infinite like examples, not only of arguments that are false in themselves, but silly ones, that do not hold in themselves, and that accuse

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.
[2] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* ii. 37.
[3] Id. *ib.* iii. 9.
[4] Id. *ib.* iii. 9, ii. 12.

their authors not so much of ignorance as imprudence, in the reproaches the philosophers dash one another in the teeth withal, upon their dissensions in their sects and opinions.

Whoever should bundle up a lusty faggot of the fooleries of human wisdom would produce wonders. I willingly muster up these few for a pattern, by a certain meaning not less profitable to consider than the most sound and moderate instructions. Let us judge by these what opinion we are to have of man, of his sense and reason, when in these great persons that have raised human knowledge so high, so many gross mistakes and manifest errors are to be found.

Whether the ancient philosophers treated of knowledge seriously.

For my part, I am apt to believe that they have treated of knowledge casually, and like a toy, with both hands; and have contended about reason as of a vain and frivolous instrument, setting on foot all sorts of fancies and inventions, sometimes more sinewy, and sometimes weaker. This same Plato, who defines man as if he were a cock, says elsewhere,[1] after Socrates, "That he does not, in truth, know what man is, and that he is a member of the world the hardest to understand." By this variety and instability of opinions, they tacitly lead us, as it were by the hand, to this resolution of their irresolution. They profess not always to deliver their opinions barefaced and apparent to us; they have one while disguised them in the fabulous shadows of poetry, and at another in some other vizor; for our imperfection carries this also along with it, that crude meat is not always proper for our stomachs; we must dry, alter, and mix it; they do the same; they sometimes conceal their real opinions and judgments, and falsify them to accommodate themselves to the public use. They will not make an open profession of ignorance, and of the imbecility of human reason, that they may not fright children; but they sufficiently discover it to us under the appearance of a troubled and inconstant science.

[1] In the first *Alcibiades*. It is Socrates who, by his arguments, reduces Alcibiades to say this.

I advised a person in Italy, who had a great mind to speak Italian, that provided he only had a desire to make himself understood, without being ambitious in any other respect to excel, that he should only make use of the first word that came to the tongue's end, whether Latin, French, Spanish, or Gascon, and that, by adding the Italian termination, he could not fail of hitting upon some idiom of the country, either Tuscan, Roman, Venetian, Piedmontese, or Neapolitan, and so fall in with some one of those many forms. I say the same of Philosophy; she has so many faces, so much variety, and has said so many things, that all our dreams and ravings are there to be found. Human fancy can conceive nothing good or bad that is not there: *Nihil tam absurde dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo philosophorum.*[1] Nothing can be said so absurd, that has not been said before by some of the philosophers." And I am the more willing to expose my whimsies to the public; forasmuch as, though they are spun out of myself, and without any pattern, I know they will be found related to some ancient humour, and some will not stick to say, "See whence he took it!" My manners are natural, I have not called in the assistance of any discipline to erect them; but, weak as they are, when it came into my head to lay them open to the world's view, and that to expose them to the light in a little more decent garb I went to adorn them with reasons and examples, it was a wonder to myself accidentally to find them conformable to so many philosophical discourses and examples. I never knew what regimen my life was of till it was near worn out and spent; a new figure—an unpremeditated and accidental philosopher.

Philosophy full of uncertainty and extravagance.

But to return to the soul.[2] Inasmuch as Plato has placed reason in the brain, anger in the heart, and concupiscence in the liver; 'tis likely that it was rather an interpretation of the movements of

The most probable hypothesis concerning the human soul.

[1] Cicero, *de Divinat.* ii. 58.

[2] The edition of 1588 adds here, "(for I have selected the soul as the most apt for instancing our weakness and vanity)." The following analysis of the doctrine of Plato is taken from the second part of the *Timæus*. See also Laertius, *Life of Plato*.

the soul, than that he intended a division and separation of it, as of a body, into several members. And the most likely of their opinions is that 'tis always a soul, that by its faculty, reasons, remembers, comprehends, judges, desires, and exercises all its other operations by divers instruments of the body; as the pilot guides his ship according to his experience, one while straining or slacking the cordage, one while hoisting the mainyard, or removing the rudder, by one and the same power carrying on several effects; and that it is lodged in the brain; which appears in that the wounds and accidents that touch that part do immediately offend the faculties of the soul; and 'tis not incongruous that it should thence diffuse itself through the other parts of the body:—

Medium non deserit unquam
Cœli Phœbus iter; radiis tamen omnia lustrat.[1]

"Phœbus ne'er deviates from the zodiac's way;
Yet all things doth illustrate with his ray."

As the sun sheds from heaven its light and influence, and fills the world with them:—

Cætera pars animæ, per totum dissita corpus,
Paret, et ad numen mentis momenque movetur.[2]

"The other part o' th' soul diffus'd all o'er
The body, does obey the reason's lore."

Some have said that there was a general soul, as it were a great body, whence all the particular souls were extracted, and thither again return, always restoring themselves to that universal matter:—

Deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum;
Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,
Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vitas:
Scilicet huc reddi deinde, ac resoluta referri
Omnia; nec morti esse locum:[3]

"For God goes forth, and spreads throughout the whole
Heaven, earth, and sea, the universal soul;

[1] Claudian, *De Sexto Consul. Honorii.* 111.

[2] Lucret. iii. 144.

[3] Virgil, *Georgic.* iv. 221.

Each at its birth, from him all beings share,
Both man and brute, the breath of vital air;
To him return, and, loos'd from earthly chain,
Fly whence they sprung, and rest in God again,
Spurn at the grave, and, fearless of decay,
Dwell in high heaven, and star th' ethereal way."

Others, that they only rejoined and reunited themselves to it; others, that they were produced from the divine substance; others, by the angels of fire and air; others, that they were from all antiquity; and some that they were created at the very point of time the bodies wanted them; others make them to descend from the orb of the moon, and return thither; the generality of the ancients believed that they were begotten from father to son, after a like manner, and produced with all other natural things; taking their argument from the likeness of children to their fathers;

Instillata patris virtus tibi;
Fortes creantur fortibus, et bonis; [1]

" Thou hast thy father's virtues with his blood:
For still the brave spring from the brave and good; "

and that we see descend from fathers to their children not only bodily marks, but moreover a resemblance of humours, complexions, and inclinations of the soul:—

Denique cur acris violentia triste leonum
Seminium sequitur? dolus vulpibus, et fuga cervis
A patribus datur, et patrius pavor incitat artus?
. . . . . .
Si non certa suo quia semine seminioque
Vis animi pariter crescit cum corpore toto. [2]

" For why should rage from the fierce lion's seed,
Or from the subtle fox's craft, proceed;
Or why the tim'rous and flying hart
His fear and trembling to his race impart;
But that a certain force of mind does grow,
And still increases as the bodies do? "

That thereupon the divine justice is grounded, punishing in the children the faults of their fathers; forasmuch as the contagion of paternal vices is in some sort imprinted in the

[1] Horace, *Od.* iv. 4, 29. [2] Lucret. iii. 741.

soul of children, and that the ill government of their will extends to them ;[1] moreover, that if souls had any other derivation than a natural consequence, and that they had been some other thing out of the body, they would retain some memory of their first being, the natural faculties that are proper to them of discoursing, reasoning, and remembering, being considered :—

The opinion of the preëxistence of the souls before their union to our bodies confuted.

Si in corpus nascentibus insinuatur,
Cur super anteactam ætatem meminisse nequimus,
Nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?[2]

"For at our birth if it infused be,
Why do we then retain no memory
Of our foregoing life, and why no more
Remember any thing we did before?"

for, to make the condition of our souls such as we would have it to be, we must suppose them all-knowing, even in their natural simplicity and purity ; by these means they had been such, being free from the prison of the body, as well before they entered into it, as we hope they shall be after they are gone out of it ; and from this knowledge it should follow that they should remember, being got in the body, as Plato said,[3] "That what we learn is no other than a remembrance of what we knew before ;" a thing which every one by experience may maintain to be false. Forasmuch, in the first place, as that we do not justly remember any thing but what we have been taught, and that if the memory did purely perform its office it would at least suggest to us something more than what we have learned. Secondly, that which she knew being in her purity, was a true knowledge, knowing things as they are by her divine intelligence ; whereas here we make her receive falsehood and vice when we instruct her ; wherein she cannot employ her reminiscence, that image and conception having never been planted in her. To say that the corporal prison does in such sort suffocate her natural faculties,

[1] Plutarch, *Why Divine Justice, &c.*
[2] Lucret. iii. 661.
[3] In the *Phædon*.

that they are there utterly extinct, is first contrary to this other belief of acknowledging her power to be so great, and the operations of it that men sensibly perceive in this life so admirable, as to have thereby concluded that divinity and eternity past, and the immortality to come:—

> Nam si tantopere est animi mutata potestas,
> Omnis ut actarum exciderit retinentia rerum,
> Non, ut opinor, ea ab letho jam longior errat.[1]
>
> "For if the mind be changed to that degree
> As of past things to lose all memory,
> So great a change as that, I must confess,
> Appears to me than death but little less."

Furthermore, 'tis here with us, and not elsewhere, that the force and effects of the soul ought to be considered; all the rest of her perfections are vain and useless to her; 'tis by her present condition that all her immortality is to be rewarded and paid, and of the life of man only that she is to render an account. It had been injustice to have stripped her of her means and powers; to have disarmed her in order, in the time of her captivity and imprisonment in the flesh, of her weakness and infirmity in the time wherein she was forced and compelled, to pass an infinite and perpetual sentence and condemnation, and to insist upon the consideration of so short a time, peradventure but an hour or two, or at the most but a century, which has no more proportion with infinity than an instant; in this momentary interval to ordain and definitively to determine of her whole being; it were an unreasonable disproportion, too, to assign an eternal recompense in consequence of so short a life. Plato,[2] to defend himself from this inconvenience, will have future payments limited to the term of a hundred years, relatively to human duration; and of us ourselves there are enough who have given them temporal limits. By this they judged that the generation of the soul followed the common condition of human things, as

That the soul is born, and grows strong and weak with the body.

[1] Lucret. iii. 674.

[2] *Republic.* x.

also her life, according to the opinion of Epicurus and Democritus, which has been the most received; in consequence of these fine appearances that they saw it born, and that, according as the body grew more capable, they saw it increase in vigour as the other did; that its feebleness in infancy was very manifest, and in time its better strength and maturity, and after that its declension and old age, and at last its decrepitude:—

Gigni pariter cum corpore, et una
Crescere sentimus, pariterque senescere mentem.[1]

"Souls with the bodies to be born we may
Discern, with them t' increase, with them decay."

They perceived it to be capable of divers passions, and agitated with divers painful motions, whence it fell into lassitude and uneasiness; capable of alteration and change, of cheerfulness, of stupidity and languor, and subject to diseases and injuries, as the stomach or the foot;

Mentem sanari, corpus ut ægrum,
Cernimus, et flecti medicinâ posse videmus;[2]

"Sick minds, as well as bodies, we do see
By Med'cine's virtue oft restored to be;"

dazzled and intoxicated with the fumes of wine, jostled from her seat by the vapours of a burning fever, laid asleep by the application of some medicaments, and roused by others,—

Corpoream naturam animi esse necesse est,
Corporeis quoniam telis ictuque laborat;[3]

"There must be of necessity, we find,
A nature that's corporeal of the mind,
Because we evidently see it smarts
And wounded is with shafts the body darts;"

they saw it astonished and overthrown in all its faculties through the mere bite of a mad dog, and in that condition to have no stability of reason, no sufficiency, no virtue, no philosophical resolution, no resistance that could exempt it from

[1] Lucret. iii. 446.
[2] Id. *ib.* 509.
[3] Id. *ib.* 176.

the subjection of such accidents; the slaver of a contemptible cur shed upon the hand of Socrates, to shake all his wisdom and all his great and regulated imaginations, and so to annihilate them, as that there remained no trace of his former knowledge,—

Vis .... animai
Conturbatur, et .... divisa seorsum
Disjectatur, eodem illo distracta veneno;[1]

"The power of the soul's disturbed; and when
That once is but sequestered from her, then
By the same poison 'tis dispersed abroad;"

and this poison to find no more resistance in that great soul than in an infant of four years old; a poison sufficient to make all philosophy, if it were incarnate, become furious and mad; insomuch that Cato, who ever disdained death and fortune, could not endure the sight of a looking-glass, or of water, overwhelmed with horror and affright at the thought of falling, by the contagion of a mad dog, into the disease called by physicians hydrophobia:—

Vis morbi distracta per artus
Turbat agens animam, spumantes æquore salso
Ventorum ut validis fervescunt viribus undæ.[2]

"Throughout the limbs diffused, the fierce disease
Disturbs the soul, as in the briny seas,
The foaming waves to swell and boil we see,
Stirred by the wind's impetuosity."

Now, as to this particular, philosophy has sufficiently armed man to encounter all other accidents either with patience, or, if the search of that costs too dear, by an infallible defeat, in totally depriving himself of all sentiment; but these are expedients that are only of use to a soul being itself, and in its full power, capable of reason and deliberation; but not at all proper for this inconvenience, where, in a philosopher, the soul becomes the soul of a madman, troubled, overturned, and lost; which many occasions may produce, as a too vehement agitation that any violent passion of the soul

[1] Lucret. iii. 498. [2] Id. *ib.* 591.

may beget in itself; or a wound in a certain part of the person, or vapours from the stomach, any of which may stupefy the understanding and turn the brain.

> Morbis in corporis avius errat
> Sæpe animus; dementit enim, deliraque fatur;
> Interdumque gravi lethargo fertur in altum
> Æternumque soporem, oculis nutuque cadenti: [1]

> "For when the body's sick, and ill at ease,
> The mind doth often share in the disease;
> Wonders, grows wild, and raves, and sometimes by
> A heavy and a stupid lethargy,
> Is overcome and cast into a deep,
> A most profound and everlasting sleep."

The philosophers, methinks, have not much touched this string, no more than another of equal importance; they have this dilemma continually in their mouths, to console our mortal condition: "The soul is either mortal or immortal; if mortal, it will suffer no pain; if immortal, it will change for the better."—They never touch the other branch, "What if she change for the worse?" and leave to the poets the menaces of future torments. But thereby they make themselves a good game. These are two omissions that I often meet with in their discourses. I return to the first.

This soul loses the use of the sovereign stoical good, so constant and so firm. Our fine human wisdom must here yield, and give up her arms. As to the rest, they also considered, by the vanity of human reason, that the mixture and association of two so contrary things as the mortal and the immortal, was unimaginable:—

> Quippe etenim mortale æterno jungere, et una
> Consentire putare, et fungi mutua posse,
> Desipere est. Quid enim diversius esse putandum est,
> Aut magis inter se disjunctum discrepitansque,
> Quam, mortale quod est, immortali atque perenni
> Junctum, in concilio, sævas tolerare procellas? [2]

> "The mortal and th' eternal, then, to blend,
> And think they can pursue one common end,

[1] Lucret. iii. 464. [2] Id. *ib.* 801.

Is madness: for what things more diff'rent are,
Distinct in nature, and disposed to jar?
How can it then be thought that these should bear,
When thus conjoined, of harms an equal share?"

Moreover, they perceived the soul tending towards death as well as the body:—

Simul ævo fessa fatiscit:[1]

"Fatigued together with the weight of years:"

which, according to Zeno, the image of sleep does sufficiently demonstrate to us; for he looks upon it "as a fainting and fall of the soul, as well as of the body:" *Contrahi animum, et quasi labi putat atque decidere:*[2] and, what they perceived in some, that the soul maintained its force and vigour to the last gasp of life, they attributed to the variety of diseases, as it is observable in men at the last extremity, that some retain one sense, and some another; one the hearing, and another the smell, without any manner of defect or alteration; and that there is not so universal a deprivation that some parts do not remain vigorous and entire:—

Non alio pacto, quam si, pes cum dolet ægri,
In nullo caput interea sit forte dolore.[3]

"So, often of the gout a man complains,
Whose head is, at the same time, free from pains."

The sight of our judgment is, to truth, the same that the owl's eyes are to the splendour of the sun, says Aristotle.[4] By what can we better convince him, than by so gross blindness in so apparent a light? For the contrary opinion of the immortality of the soul, which, Cicero says, was first introduced, according to the testimony of books at least, by Pherecydes Syrius,[5] in the time of King Tullus (though some attribute it to Thales, and others to others), 'tis the part of human science that is treated of with the greatest doubt and

[1] Lucret. iii. 459.
[2] Cicero, *de Divinat.* ii. 58.
[3] Lucret. iii. 111.
[4] *Metaphys.* ii. 1.
[5] *Of Syros.* Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 16, from whose text it would appear that we should rather read *King Tullius.*

reservation. The most positive dogmatists are fain, in this point principally, to fly to the refuge of the Academy. No one doubts what Aristotle has established upon this subject, no more than all the ancients in general, who handle it with a wavering belief: *Rem gratissimam promittentium magis quam probantium:*[1] "A thing more acceptable in the promisors than the provers." He conceals himself in clouds of words of difficult, unintelligible sense, and has left to those of his sect as great a dispute about his judgment as about the matter itself.

The foundation of the opinion of the soul's immortality.

Two things rendered this opinion plausible to them; one, that, without the immortality of souls, there would be nothing whereon to ground the vain hopes of glory, which is a consideration of wonderful repute in the world; the other, that it is a very profitable impression, as Plato says,[2] that vices, when they escape the discovery and cognizance of human justice, are still within the reach of the divine, which will pursue them even after the death of the guilty. Man is excessively solicitous to prolong his being, and has to the utmost of his power provided for it; there are monuments for the conservation of the body, and glory to preserve the name. He has employed all his wit and opinion to the rebuilding of himself, impatient of his fortune, and to prop himself by his inventions. The soul, by reason of its anxiety and impotence, being unable to stand by itself, wanders up and down to seek out consolations, hopes, and foundations, and alien circumstances, to which she adheres and fixes; and how light or fantastic soever invention delivers them to her, relies more willingly, and with greater assurance, upon them than upon herself. But 'tis wonderful to observe how the most constant and obstinate maintainers of this just and clear persuasion of the immortality of the soul fall short, and how weak their arguments are, when they go about to prove it by human reason: *Somnia sunt non docentis, sed optantis:* "They are dreams, not

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 102.

[2] *Laws*, x. 18.

of the teacher, but wisher," says one of the ancients.[1] By which testimony man may know that he owes the truth he himself finds out to fortune and accident; since that even then, when it is fallen into his hand, he has not wherewith to hold and maintain it, and that his reason has not force to make use of it. All things produced by our own meditation and understanding, whether true or false, are subject to incertitude and controversy. 'Twas for the chastisement of our pride, and for the instruction of our miserable condition and incapacity, that God wrought the perplexity and confusion of the tower of Babel. Whatever we undertake without his assistance, whatever we see without the lamp of his grace, is but vanity and folly. We corrupt the very essence of truth, which is uniform and constant, by our weakness, when fortune puts it into our possession. What course soever man takes of himself, God still permits it to come to the same confusion, the image whereof he so lively represents to us in the just chastisement wherewith he crushed Nimrod's presumption, and frustrated the vain attempt of his proud structure; *Perdam sapientiam sapientium, et prudentiam prudentium reprobabo.*[2] "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." The diversity of idioms and tongues, with which he disturbed this work, what are they other than this infinite and perpetual alteration and discordance of opinions and reasons, which accompany and confound the vain building of human wisdom, and to very good effect too; for what would hold us, if we had but the least grain of knowledge? This saint has very much obliged me: *Ipsa veritatis occultatio aut humilitatis exercitatio est, aut elationis attritio.*[3] "The very concealment of the truth is either an exercise of humility or a quelling of presumption." To what a pitch of presumption and insolence do we raise our blindness and folly!

But to return to my subject. It was truly very good

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* ii 88.
[2] St. Paul, 1 *Corinthians*, i. 19.
[3] St. August. *de Civit. Dei*, ii. 22.

reason that we should be beholden to God only, and to the favour of his grace, for the truth of so noble a belief, since from his sole bounty we receive the fruit of immortality, which consists in the enjoyment of eternal beatitude. Let us ingenuously confess that God alone has dictated it to us, and faith; for 'tis no lesson of nature and our own reason. And whoever will inquire into his own being and power, both within and without, without this divine privilege; whoever shall consider man impartially, and without flattery, will see in him no efficacy or faculty that relishes of any thing but death and earth. The more we give and confess to owe and render to God, we do it with the greater Christianity. That which this Stoic philosopher says he holds from the fortuitous consent of the popular voice; had it not been better that he had held it from God? *Cum de animarum æternitate disserimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum aut timentium inferos, aut colentium. Utor hâc publicâ persuasione.*[1] "When we discourse of the immortality of souls, the consent of men that either fear or adore the infernal powers, is of no small advantage. I make use of this public persuasion."

It is by revelation we are assured of the soul's immortality.

Now the weakness of human arguments upon this subject is particularly manifested by the fabulous circumstances they have superadded as consequences of this opinion, to find out of what condition this immortality of ours was. Let us omit the Stoics, (*usuram nobis largiuntur tanquam cornicibus; diu mansuros aiunt animos; semper, negant.*[2] "They give us a long life, as also they do to crows; they say our soul shall continue long, but that it shall continue always they deny,") who give to souls a life after this, but finite. The most universal and received fancy, and that continues down to our times in various places,[3] is that of which they make Pythagoras the author; not that he was the original inventor,

What constitutes the soul's immortality, according to several philosophers.

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 117.
[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 31.
[3] In Persia, Hindostan, and elsewhere.

but because it received a great deal of weight and repute by the authority of his approbation: "That souls, at their departure out of us, did nothing but shift from one body to another, from a lion to a horse, from a horse to a king, continually travelling at this rate from habitation to habitation;" and he himself said that he remembered he had been Æthalides,[1] since that Euphorbus, afterwards Hermotimus, and, finally, from Pyrrhus was passed into Pythagoras; having a memory of himself of two hundred and six years. And some have added that these very souls sometimes mount up to heaven, and come down again:—

> O pater, anne aliquas ad cœlum hinc ire putandum est
> Sublimes animas, iterumque ad tarda reverti
> Corpora? Quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido?[2]

> "O, father, is it then to be conceiv'd
> That any of these spirits, so sublime,
> Should hence to the celestial regions climb,
> And thence return to earth to reassume
> Their sluggish bodies rotting in a tomb?
> For wretched life whence does such fondness come?"

Origen makes them eternally to go and come from a better to a worse estate. The opinion that Varro[3] mentions is that, after four hundred and forty years' revolution, they should be reunited to their first bodies; Chrysippus[4] held that this would happen after a certain space of time unknown and unlimited. Plato,[5] who professes to have embraced this belief from Pindar and the ancient poets, that we are to undergo infinite vicissitudes of mutation, for which the soul is prepared, having neither punishment nor reward in the other world but what is temporal, as its life here is but temporal, concludes that it has a singular knowledge of the affairs of heaven, of hell, of the world, through all which it has passed, repassed, and made stay in several voyages; fit matters for her memory. Observe her progress elsewhere:[6] "The soul

[1] Laertius, *in Vith.*
[2] *Æneid*, vi. 719.
[3] As that of some "casters of nativities," *genethliaci quidam*. The passage is in St. August. *de Civit. Dei*, xxii. 28.
[4] Lactantius, *Div. Just.* vii. 28.
[5] In the *Menon*.
[6] In the *Timæus*.

that has lived well is reunited to the stars to which it is assigned; that which has lived ill removes into a woman, and if it do not there reform, is again removed into a beast of condition suitable to its vicious manners, and shall see no end of its punishments till it be returned to its natural constitution, and that it has, by the force of reason, purged itself from those gross, stupid, and elementary qualities it was polluted with." But I will not omit the objection the Epicureans make against this transmigration from one body to another; 'tis a pleasant one; they ask what expedient would be found out if the number of the dying should chance to be greater than that of those who are coming into the world. For the souls, turned out of their old habitation, would scuffle and crowd which should first get possession of their new lodging; and they further demand how they shall pass away their time, whilst waiting till new quarters are made ready for them? Or, on the contrary, if more animals should be born than die, the body, they say, would be but in an ill condition whilst waiting for a soul to be infused into it; and it would fall out that some bodies would die before they had been alive.

> Denique connubia ad Veneris, partusque ferarum
> Esse animas præsto, deridiculum esse videtur;
> Et spectare immortales mortalia membra
> Innumero numero, certareque præproperanter
> Inter se, quæ prima potissimaque insinueter.[1]
>
> "Absurd to think that whilst wild beasts beget,
> Or bear their young, a thousand souls do wait,
> Expect the falling body, fight and strive
> Which first shall enter in and make it live."

Others have arrested the soul in the body of the deceased, with it to animate serpents, worms, and other beasts, which are said to be bred out of the corruption of our members, and even out of our ashes; others divide them into two parts, the one mortal, the other immortal; others make it corporeal, and nevertheless immortal. Some make it immortal, without

[1] Lucret. iii. 777.

sense or knowledge. There are others, even among ourselves, who have believed that devils were made of the souls of the damned; as Plutarch thinks that gods were made of those that were saved; for there are few things which that author is so positive in as he is in this; maintaining elsewhere a doubtful and ambiguous way of expression. "We are told," says he, "and steadfastly should believe, that the souls of virtuous men, both according to nature and the divine justice, become saints, and from saints demigods, and from demigods, after they are perfectly, as in sacrifices of purgation, cleansed and purified, being delivered from all passibility and all mortality, they become, not by any civil decree, but in real truth, and according to all probability of reason, entire and perfect gods, in receiving a most happy and glorious end." [1] But who desires to see him—him, who is yet the most sober and moderate of the whole gang of philosophers, lay about him with greater boldness, and relate his miracles upon this subject, I refer him to his treatise *of the Moon*, and *of the Demon of Socrates*, where he may, as evidently as in any other place whatever, satisfy himself that the mysteries of philosophy have many strange things in common with those of poetry; human understanding losing itself in attempting to sound and search all things to the bottom; even as we, tired and worn out with a long course of life, return to infancy and dotage. See here the fine and certain instructions which we extract from human knowledge concerning the soul.

Neither is there less temerity in what they teach us touching our corporal parts. Let us choose out one or two examples; for otherwise we should lose ourselves in this vast and troubled ocean of medical errors. Let us first know whether, at least, they agree about the matter whereof men produce one another; for as to their first production it is no wonder if, in a thing so high and so long since past, human understanding finds itself puz-

Opinions as to the matter that produces the human body.

[1] *Life of Romulus*, c. 14.

zled and perplexed. Archelaus, the physician, whose disciple and favourite Socrates was, according to Aristoxenus, said[1] that both men and beasts were made of a lacteous slime, expressed by the heat of the earth; Pythagoras says[2] that our seed is the foam or cream of our better blood; Plato, that it is the distillation of the marrow of the backbone; raising his argument from this, that that part is first sensible of being weary of the work; Alcmeon, that it is part of the substance of the brain, and that it is so, says he, is proved by the weakness of the eyes in those who are immoderate in that exercise; Democritus, that it is a substance extracted from the whole mass of the body; Epicurus, an extract from soul and body; Aristotle, an excrement drawn from the aliment of the blood, the last which is diffused over our members; others, that it is a blood concocted and digested by the heat of the genitals, which they judge, by reason that in excessive endeavours a man voids pure blood; wherein there seems to be more likelihood, could a man extract any appearance from so infinite a confusion. Now, to bring this seed to do its work, how many contrary opinions do they set on foot? Aristotle[3] and Democritus are of opinion that women have no sperm, and that 'tis nothing but a sweat that they distil in the heat of pleasure and motion, and that contributes nothing at all to generation. Galen, on the contrary, and his followers, believe that without the concurrence of seeds there can be no generation. Here are the physicians, the philosophers, the lawyers, and divines, by the ears with our wives about the dispute, "For what term women carry their fruit?" and I, for my part, by the example of myself, stick with those that maintain a woman goes eleven months with child. The world is built upon this experience; there is no so commonplace a woman that cannot give her judgment in all these controversies; and yet we cannot agree.

Time of women's pregnancy undetermined.

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.

[2] Plutarch, *On the Op. of the Philos.* whence the following examples are also taken.

[3] Plutarch, *ut supra*, adds Zeno to Aristotle, and says expressly that Democritus, on the contrary, held that females shed their seed.

Here is enough to verify that man is no better instructed in the knowledge of himself, in his corporal than in his spiritual part. We have proposed himself to himself, and his reason to his reason, to see what she could say. I think I have sufficiently demonstrated how little she understands herself in herself; and who understands not himself in himself, in what can he? *Quasi vero mensuram ullius rei possit agere, qui sui nesciat.*[1] "As if he could understand the measure of any other thing, that knows not his own." In earnest, Protagoras[2] told us a pretty flam in making man the measure of all things, that never knew so much as his own; and if it be not he, his dignity will not permit that any other creature should have this advantage; now he being so contrary in himself, and one judgment so incessantly subverting another, this favourable proposition was but a mockery, which induced us necessarily to conclude the nullity of the compass and the compasser. When Thales[3] reputes the knowledge of man very difficult for man to comprehend, he at the same time gives him to understand that all other knowledge is impossible.

You,[4] for whom I have taken the pains, contrary to my custom, to write so long a discourse, will not refuse to support your Sebond by the ordinary forms of arguing, wherewith you are every day instructed, and in this will exercise both your wit and learning; for this last fencing trick is never to be made use of but as an extreme remedy; 'tis a desperate thrust, wherein you are to quit your own arms to make your adversary abandon his; and a secret sleight, which must be very rarely, and then very reservedly, put in practice. 'Tis great temerity to lose yourself that you may destroy another; you must not die to be revenged, as Gobrias did; for, being closely grappled in combat with a lord of Persia, Darius coming in sword in hand, and fearing to strike lest he should kill Gobrias, he called out to him boldly to fall on,

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 1.
[2] Sextus Empiric. *Adv. Math.*
[3] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*
[4] The author, as we have already mentioned, is addressing Margaret de Valois, Queen of Navarre.

though he should run them both through at once.[1] I have known desperate weapons, and conditions of single combat, and wherein he that offered them put himself and his adversary upon terms of inevitable death to them both, censured for unjust. The Portuguese, in the Indian Sea, took certain Turks prisoners, who, impatient of their captivity, resolved, and it succeeded, by striking the nails of the ship one against another, and making a spark to fall into the barrels of powder that were set in the place where they were guarded, to blow up and reduce themselves, their masters, and the vessel to ashes. We here touch the out-plate and utmost limits of sciences, wherein the extremity is vicious, as in virtue. Keep yourselves in the common road; it is not good to be so subtle and cunning. Remember the Tuscan proverb:—

Chi troppo s'assottiglia, si scavezza.[2]

"Who makes himself too wise, becomes a fool."

I advise you that, in all your opinions and discourses, as well as in your manners and all other things, you keep yourself moderate and temperate, and avoid novelty; I am an enemy to all extravagant ways. You, who by the authority of your grandeur, and yet more by the advantages which those qualities give you that are more your own, may with the twinkle of an eye command whom you please, ought to have given this charge to some one who made profession of letters, who might after a better manner have proved and illustrated these things to you. But here is as much as you will stand in need of.

Epicurus said of the laws,[3] "That the worst were so necessary for us that without them men would devour one another." And Plato[4] affirms, "That without laws we should live like beasts." Our wit is a wandering, dangerous, and temerarious utensil; it is hard to couple any order or measure to it; in those of our

The necessity of laws to keep men in order.

[1] Herod. iii. 78.
[2] Petrarch, canz. xi. v. 48.
[3] Plutarch, *Against Colotes.*
[4] *Laws*, ix.

own time, who are endued with any rare excellence above others, or any extraordinary vivacity of understanding, we see them almost all lash out into licentiousness of opinions and manners; and 'tis almost a miracle to find one temperate and sociable. 'Tis all the reason in the world to limit human wit within the strictest limits imaginable; in study, as in all the rest, we ought to have its steps and advances numbered and fixed, and that the limits of its inquisition be bounded by art. It is curbed and fettered by religions, laws, customs, sciences, precepts, mortal and immortal penalties. And yet we see that it escapes from all these bonds by its volubility and dissolution; 'tis a vain body which has nothing to lay hold on or to seize; a various and difform body, incapable of being either bound or held. In earnest, there are few souls so regular, firm, and well descended, as are to be trusted with their own conduct, and that can with moderation, and without temerity, sail in the liberty of their own judgments, beyond the common and received opinions; 'tis more expedient to put them under pupilage. Wit is a dangerous weapon, even to the possessor, if he knows not how to use it discreetly; and there is not a beast to whom a headboard is more justly to be given, to keep his looks down and before his feet, and to hinder him from wandering here and there out of the tracks which custom and the laws have laid before him. And therefore it will be better for you to keep yourself in the beaten path, let it be what it will, than to fly out at a venture with this unbridled liberty. But if any of these new doctors will pretend to be ingenious in your presence, at the expense both of your soul and his own, to avoid this dangerous plague, which is every day laid in your way to infect you, this preservative, in the extremest necessity, will prevent the danger and hinder the contagion of this poison from offending either you or your company.

The liberty, then, and frolic forwardness of these ancient wits produced in philosophy and human sciences several sects of different opinions, every one undertaking to judge and

make choice of what he would stick to and maintain. But now that men go all one way, *Qui certis quibusdam destinatisque sententiis addicti et consecrati sunt, ut etiam, quæ non probant, cogantur defendere*,[1] "Who are so tied and obliged to certain opinions that they are bound to defend even those they do not approve," and that we receive the arts by civil authority and decree, so that the schools have but one pattern, and a like circumscribed institution and discipline, we no more take notice what the coin weighs, and is really worth, but every one receives it according to the estimate that common approbation and use puts upon it; the alloy is not questioned, but how much it is current for. In like manner all things pass; we take physic as we do geometry; and tricks of hocus-pocus, enchantments, and love-spells, the correspondence of the souls of the dead, prognostications, domifications,[2] and even this ridiculous pursuit of the philosophers' stone, all things pass for current pay, without any manner of scruple or contradiction. We need to know no more but that Mars' house is in the middle of the triangle of the hand, that of Venus in the thumb, and that of Mercury in the little finger; that when the table-line cuts the tubercle of the forefinger 'tis a sign of cruelty, that when it falls short of the middle finger, and that the natural median-line makes an angle with the vital in the same side, 'tis a sign of a miserable death; that if in a woman the natural line be open, and does not close the angle with the vital, this denotes that she shall not be very chaste. I leave you to judge whether a man qualified with such knowledge may not pass with reputation and esteem in all companies.

Theophrastus said that human knowledge, guided by the senses, might judge of the causes of things to a certain degree; but that being arrived to first and extreme causes, it must stop short and retire, by reason either of its own infirmity or the difficulty of things. 'Tis a

The extent of human knowledge.

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* ii. 2.

[2] A term of astrology, signifying the arrangement of the heavens into twelve *houses*, for the purpose of casting nativities.

moderate and gentle opinion, that our own understandings may conduct us to the knowledge of some things, and that it has certain measures of power, beyond which 'tis temerity to employ it; this opinion is plausible, and introduced by men of well composed minds, but 'tis hard to limit our wit, which is curious and greedy, and will no more stop at a thousand than at fifty paces; having experimentally found that, wherein one has failed, the other has hit, and that what was unknown to one age, the age following has explained; and that arts and sciences are not cast in a mould, but are formed and perfected by degrees, by often handling and polishing, as bears leisurely lick their cubs into form; what my force cannot discover, I do not yet desist to sound and to try; and by handling and kneading this new matter over and over again, by turning and heating it, I lay open to him that shall succeed me, a kind of facility to enjoy it more at his ease, and make it more maniable and supple for him,

Ut hymettia sole
Cera remollescit, tractataque pollice multas
Vertitur in facies, ipsoque fit utilis usu;[1]

"As wax doth softer in the sun become,
And, tempered 'twixt the finger and the thumb,
Will various forms, and several shapes admit,
Till for the present use 'tis rendered fit;"

as much will the second do for the third; which is the cause that the difficulty ought not to make me despair, and my own incapacity as little; for 'tis nothing but my own.

The human understanding incapable of attaining to the evident knowledge of things.

Man is as capable of all things as of some; and if he confesses, as Theophrastus says, the ignorance of first causes, let him at once surrender all the rest of his knowledge; if he is defective in foundation, his reason is aground; disputation and inquiry have no other aim nor stop but principles; if this aim do not stop his career, he runs into an infinite irresolution. *Non potest aliud alio magis minusve comprehendi, quoniam omnium rerum una est definitio comprehendendi:*[2]

[1] Ovid, *Met.* x. 284.

[2] Cicero, *Acad.* iv. 31.

"One thing can no more or less be comprehended than another, because the definition of comprehending all things is the same." Now 'tis very likely that, if the soul knew any thing, it would in the first place know itself; and if it knew any thing out of itself, it would be its own body and case, before any thing else. If we see the gods of physic to this very day debating about our anatomy,

Mulciber in Trojam, pro Trojâ stabat Apollo;[1]
"Vulcan against, for Troy Apollo stood;"

when are we to expect that they will be agreed? We are nearer neighbours to ourselves than whiteness to snow, or weight to stones. If man do not know himself, how should he know his force and functions? It is not, perhaps, that we have not some real knowledge in us; but 'tis by chance; forasmuch as errors are received into our soul by the same way, after the same manner, and by the same conduct, it has not wherewithal to distinguish them, nor wherewithal to choose the truth from falsehood.

The Academics admitted a certain partiality of judgment, and thought it too crude to say that it was not more likely to say that snow was white than black; and that we were no more assured of the motion of a stone, thrown by the hand, than of that of the eighth sphere. And to avoid this difficulty and strangeness, that can in truth hardly lodge in our imagination, though they concluded that we were in no sort capable of knowledge, and that truth is engulfed in so profound an abyss as is not to be penetrated by human sight; yet they acknowledged some things to be more likely than others, and received into their judgment this faculty, that they had a power to incline to one appearance more than another, they allowed him this propension, interdicting all resolution. The Pyrrhonian opinion is more bold, and also somewhat more likely; for this academic inclination, and this propension to one proposition rather than another, what is it other than a recognition of

The opinion of the Academics not so easy to be defended as that of the Pyrrhonists.

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* i. 2, 5.

some more apparent truth in this than in that? If our understanding be capable of the form, lineaments, port, and face of truth, it might as well see it entire as by halves, springing and imperfect. This appearance of likelihood, which makes them rather take the left hand than the right, augments it; multiply this ounce of verisimilitude that turns the scales to a hundred, to a thousand, ounces; it will happen in the end that the balance will itself end the controversy, and determine one choice, one entire truth. But why do they suffer themselves to incline to and be swayed by verisimilitude, if they know not the truth? How should they know the similitude of that whereof they do not know the essence? Either we can absolutely judge, or absolutely we cannot. If our intellectual and sensible faculties are without foot or foundation, if they only pull and drive, 'tis to no purpose that we suffer our judgments to be carried away with any part of their operation, what appearance soever they may seem to present us; and the surest and most happy seat of our understanding would be that where it kept itself temperate, upright, and inflexible, without tottering, or without agitation: *Inter visa, vera aut falsa, ad animi assensum, nihil interest:*[1] "Amongst things that seem, whether true or false, it signifies nothing to the assent of the mind." That things do not lodge in us in their form and essence, and do not there make their entry by their own force and authority, we sufficiently see; because, if it were so, we should receive them after the same manner; wine would have the same relish with the sick as with the healthful; he who has his finger chapt or benumbed would find the same hardness in wood or iron that he handles that another does; foreign subjects then surrender themselves to our mercy, and are seated in us as we please. Now if on our part we received any thing without alteration, if human grasp were capable and strong enough to seize on truth by our own means, these means being common to all men, this truth would be conveyed from hand to

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* iv. 28.

hand, from one to another; and at least there would be some one thing to be found in the world, amongst so many as there are, that would be believed by men with an universal consent; but this, that there is no one proposition that is not debated and controverted amongst us, or that may not be, makes it very manifest that our natural judgment does not very clearly discern what it embraces; for my judgment cannot make my companions approve of what it approves; which is a sign that I seized it by some other means than by a natural power that is in me and in all other men.

Let us lay aside this infinite confusion of opinions, which we see even amongst the philosophers themselves, and this perpetual and universal dispute about the knowledge of things; for this is truly presupposed, that men, I mean the most knowing, the best born, and of the best parts, are not agreed about any one thing, not that heaven is over our heads; for they that doubt of every thing, do also doubt of that; and they who deny that we are able to comprehend any thing, say that we have not comprehended that the heaven is over our heads, and these two opinions are, without comparison, the stronger in number.

Besides this infinite diversity and division, through the trouble that our judgment gives ourselves, and the incertainty that every one is sensible of in himself, 'tis easy to perceive that its seat is very unstable and insecure. How variously do we judge of things?—How often do we alter our opinions? What I hold and believe to-day I hold and believe with my whole belief; all my instruments and engines seize and take hold of this opinion, and become responsible to me for it, at least as much as in them lies; I could not embrace nor conserve any truth with greater confidence and assurance than I do this; I am wholly and entirely possessed with it; but has it not befallen me, not only once, but a hundred, a thousand times, every day, to have embraced some other thing with all the same instruments, and in the same con-

The uncertainty which every one may perceive in his own judgment.

dition, which I have since judged to be false? A man must at least become wise at his own expense; if I have often found myself betrayed under this colour; if my touch proves commonly false, and my balance unequal and unjust, what assurance can I now have more than at other times? Is it not stupidity and madness to suffer myself to be so often deceived by my guide? Nevertheless, let fortune remove and shift us five hundred times from place to place, let her do nothing but incessantly empty and fill into our belief, as into a vessel, other and other opinions; yet still the present and the last is the certain and infallible one; for this we must abandon goods, honour, life, health, and all.

> Posterior . . . . res illa reperta
> Perdit, et immutat sensus ad pristina quæque.[1]
>
> "The last things we find out are always best,
> And make us to disrelish all the rest."

Whatever is preached to us, and whatever we learn, we should still remember that it is man that gives and man that receives; 'tis a mortal hand that presents it to us; 'tis a mortal hand that accepts it. The things that come to us from heaven have the sole right and authority of persuasion, the sole mark of truth; which also we do not see with our own eyes, nor receive by our own means; that great and sacred image could not abide in so wretched a habitation if God for this end did not prepare it, if God did not by his particular and supernatural grace and favour fortify and reform it. At least our frail and defective condition ought to make us behave ourselves with more reservedness and moderation in our innovations and changes; we ought to remember that, whatever we receive into the understanding, we often receive things that are false, and that it is by the same instruments that so often give themselves the lie and are so often deceived.

Now it is no wonder they should so often contradict themselves, being so easy to be turned and swayed by very light

[1] Lucret. v. 1418.

occurrences. It is certain that our apprehensions, our judgment, and the faculties of the soul in general, suffer according to the movements and alterations of the body, which alterations are continual. Are not our minds more sprightly, our memories more prompt and quick, and our thoughts more lively, in health than in sickness? Do not joy and gayety make us receive subjects that present themselves to our souls quite otherwise than care and melancholy? Do you believe that Catullus's verses, or those of Sappho, please an old doting miser as they do a vigorous, amorous young man? Cleomenes, the son of Anexandridas, being sick, his friends reproached him that he had humours and whimsies that were new and unaccustomed; "I believe it," said he;[1] "neither am I the same man now as when I am in health; being now another person, my opinions and fancies are also other than they were before." In our courts of justice this word is much in use, which is spoken of criminals when they find the judges in a good humour, gentle, and mild, *Gaudeat de bonâ fortunâ;* "Let him rejoice in his good fortune;" for it is most certain that men's judgments are sometimes more prone to condemnation, more sharp and severe, and at others more facile, easy, and inclined to excuse; he that carries with him from his house the pain of the gout, jealousy, or theft by his man, having his whole soul possessed with anger, it is not to be doubted but that his judgment will lean this way. That venerable senate of the Areopagites used to hear and determine by night, for fear lest the sight of the parties might corrupt their justice. The very air itself, and the serenity of heaven, will cause some mutation in us, according to these verses in Cicero:—

The judgment depends very much on the alterations of the body.

> Tales sunt hominum mentes, quali pater ipse
> Jupiter auctiferâ lustravit lampade terras.[2]
>
> "Men's minds are influenc'd by th' external air,
> Dark or serene, as days are foul or fair."

[1] Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedemonians.*

[2] Verses translated by Cicero from the *Odyssey*, xviii. 135, and preserved by St. Augustin, *de Civit. Dei*, v. 8.

'Tis not only fevers, debauches, and great accidents, that overthrow our judgments,—the least things in the world will do it; and we are not to doubt, though we may not be sensible of it, that if a continued fever can overwhelm the soul, a tertian will in some proportionate measure alter it; if an apoplexy can stupefy and totally extinguish the sight of our understanding, we are not to doubt but that a great cold will dazzle it; and consequently there is hardly one single hour in a man's whole life wherein our judgment is in its due place and right condition, our bodies being subject to so many continual mutations, and stuffed with so many several sorts of springs, that I believe the physicians, that it is hard but that there must be always some one or other out of order.

The weakness of our judgment not easy to be discovered.

As to what remains, this malady does not very easily discover itself, unless it be extreme and past remedy; forasmuch as reason goes always lame, halting, and that too as well with falsehood as with truth; and therefore 'tis hard to discover her deviations and mistakes. I always call that appearance of meditation which every one forges in himself reason; this reason, of the condition of which there may be a hundred contrary ones about one and the same subject, is an instrument of lead and of wax, ductile, pliable, and accommodate to all sorts of biases, and to all measures; so that nothing remains but the art and skill how to turn and mould it. How uprightly soever a judge may mean, if he does not look well to himself, which few care to do, his inclination to friendship, to relationship, to beauty or revenge, and not only things of that weight, but even the fortuitous instinct that makes us favour one thing more than another, and that, without reason's permission, puts the choice upon us in two equal subjects, or some shadow of like vanity, may insensibly insinuate into his judgment the recommendation or disfavour of a cause, and make the balance dip.

I, that watch myself as narrowly as I can, and that have

my eyes continually bent upon myself, like one that has no great business to do elsewhere,

Quis sub Arcto
Rex gelidæ metuatur oræ,
Quid Tyridatem terreat, unice
Securus,[1]

"I care not whom the northern clime reveres,
Or what's the king that Tyridates fears,"

dare hardly tell the vanity and weakness I find in myself. My foot is so unstable and unsteady, I find myself so apt to totter and reel, and my sight so disordered, that, fasting, I am quite another man than when full; if health and a fair day smile upon me, I am a very affable, good-natured man; if a corn trouble my toe, I am sullen, out of humour, and not to be seen. The same pace of a horse seems to me one while hard, and another easy; and the same way one while shorter, and another longer; and the same form one while more, another less agreeable: I am one while for doing every thing, and another for doing nothing at all; and what pleases me now would be a trouble to me at another time. I have a thousand senseless and casual actions within myself; either I am possessed by melancholy or swayed by choler; now by its own private authority sadness predominates in me, and by and by, I am as merry as a cricket. When I take a book in hand I have then discovered admirable graces in such and such passages, and such as have struck my soul; let me light upon them at another time, I may turn and toss, tumble and rattle the leaves to no purpose; 'tis then to me an inform and undiscovered mass. Even in my own writings I do not always find the air of my first fancy; I know not what I would have said, and am often put to it to correct and pump for a new sense, because I have lost the first that was better. I do nothing but go and come; my judgment does not always advance—it floats and roams:—

Velut minuta magno
Deprensa navis in mari vesaniente vento.[2]

[1] Horace, *Od.* i. 26, 3.

[2] Catul. *Epig.* xxv. 12.

"Like a small bark that's tost upon the main,
When winds tempestuous heave the liquid plain."

Very often, as I am apt to do, having for exercise taken to maintain an opinion contrary to my own, my mind, bending and applying itself that way, does so engage me that way that I no more discern the reason of my former belief, and forsake it. I am, as it were, misled by the side to which I incline, be it what it will, and carried away by my own weight. Every one almost would say the same of himself, if he considered himself as I do. Preachers very well know that the emotions which steal upon them in speaking animate them towards belief; and that in passion we are more warm in the defence of our proposition, take ourselves a deeper impression of it, and embrace it with greater vehemence and approbation than we do in our colder and more temperate state. You only give your counsel a simple brief of your cause; he returns you a dubious and uncertain answer, by which you find him indifferent which side he takes. Have you feed him well that he may relish it the better, does he begin to be really concerned, and do you find him interested and zealous in your quarrel? his reason and learning will by degrees grow hot in your cause; behold an apparent and undoubted truth presents itself to his understanding; he discovers a new light in your business, and does in good earnest believe and persuade himself that it is so. Nay, I do not know whether the ardour that springs from spite and obstinacy, against the power and violence of the magistrate and danger, or the interest of reputation, may not have made some men, even at the stake, maintain the opinion for which, at liberty, and amongst friends, they would not have burned a finger. The shocks and jostles that the soul receives from the body's passions can do much in it, but its own can do a great deal more; to which it is so subjected that perhaps it may be made good that it has no other pace and motion but from the breath of those winds, without the agitation of which it would be becalmed and without action, like a ship in

the middle of the sea, to which the winds have denied their assistance. And whoever should maintain this, siding with the Peripatetics, would do us no great wrong, seeing it is very well known that the greatest and most noble actions of the soul proceed from, and stand in need of, this impulse of the passions. Valour, they say, cannot be perfect without the assistance of anger; *Semper Ajax fortis, fortissimus tamen in furore;*[1] "Ajax was always brave, but most when in a fury:" neither do we encounter the wicked and the enemy vigorously enough if we be not angry; nay, the advocate, it is said, is to inspire the judges with indignation, to obtain justice.

Irregular passions animate and accompany the most shining virtues.

Irregular desires moved Themistocles, and Demosthenes, and have pushed on the philosophers to watching, fasting, and pilgrimages; and lead us to honour, learning, and health, which are all very useful ends. And this meanness of soul, in suffering anxiety and trouble, serves to breed remorse and repentance in the conscience, and to make us sensible of the scourge of God, and politic correction for the chastisement of our offences; compassion is a spur to clemency; and the prudence of preserving and governing ourselves is roused by our fear; and how many brave actions by ambition! how many by presumption! In short, there is no brave and spiritual virtue without some irregular agitation. May not this be one of the reasons that moved the Epicureans to discharge God from all care and solicitude of our affairs; because even the effects of his goodness could not be exercised in our behalf without disturbing its repose, by the means of passions which are so many spurs and instruments pricking on the soul to virtuous actions; or have they thought otherwise, and taken them for tempests, that shamefully hurry the soul from her tranquillity? *Ut maris tranquillitas intelligitur, nullâ, ne minimâ quidem, aurâ fluctus commovente: Sic animi quietus et placatus status cernitur, quum perturbatio*

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 23.

nulla est, quâ moveri queat.[1] "As it is understood to be a calm sea when there is not the least breath of air stirring; so the state of the soul is discerned to be quiet and appeased when there is no perturbation to move it."

What varieties of sense and reason, what contrariety of imaginations does the diversity of our passions inspire us with! What assurance then can we take of a thing so mobile and unstable, subject by its condition to the dominion of trouble, and never going other than a forced and borrowed pace? If our judgment be in the power even of sickness and perturbation; if it be from folly and rashness that it is to receive the impression of things, what security can we expect from it?

Is it not a great boldness in philosophy to believe that men perform the greatest actions, and nearest approaching the Divinity, when they are furious, mad, and beside themselves?[2] We better ourselves by the privation of our reason, and by drilling it. The two natural ways to enter into the cabinet of the gods, and there to foresee the course of destiny, are fury and sleep.[3] This is pleasant to consider; by the dislocation that passions cause in our reason, we become virtuous; by its extirpation, occasioned by madness or the image of death, we become diviners and prophets. I was never so willing to believe philosophy in any thing as this. 'Tis a pure enthusiasm wherewith sacred truth has inspired the spirit of philosophy, which makes it confess, contrary to its own proposition, that the most calm, composed, and healthful estate of the soul that philosophy can seat it in is not its best condition; our waking is more a sleep than sleep itself, our wisdom less wise than folly; our dreams are worth more than our meditation; and the worst place we can take is in ourselves. But does not philosophy think that we are wise enough to consider that the voice that the spirit utters, when dismissed

The natural ways of entrance into the cabinet of the gods.

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 6.
[2] Cicero, *de Divinat.* i. 57.
[3] Plato, *Phædrus.*

from man, so clear-sighted, so great, and so perfect, and whilst it is in man so terrestrial, ignorant, and dark, is a voice proceeding from the spirit of dark, terrestrial, and ignorant man, and for this reason a voice not to be trusted and believed?

I, being of a soft and heavy complexion, have no great experience of these vehement agitations, the most of which surprise the soul on a sudden, without giving it leisure to recollect itself. But the passion that is said to be produced by idleness in the hearts of young men, though it proceed leisurely, and with a measured progress, does evidently manifest, to those who have tried to oppose its power, the violence our judgment suffers in this alteration and conversion. I have formerly attempted to withstand and repel it; for I am so far from being one of those that invite vices, that I do not so much as follow them, if they do not haul me along; I perceived it to spring, grow, and increase, in spite of my resistance; and at last, living and seeing as I was, wholly to seize and possess me. So that, as if rousing from drunkenness, the images of things began to appear to me quite other than they used to be; I evidently saw the advantages of the object I desired, grow, and increase, and expand by the influence of my imagination, and the difficulties of my attempt to grow more easy and smooth; and both my reason and conscience to be laid aside; but this fire being evaporated in an instant, as from a flash of lightning, I was aware that my soul resumed another kind of sight, another state, and another judgment; the difficulties of retreat appeared great and invincible, and the same things had quite another taste and aspect than the heat of desire had presented them to me; which of the two most truly? Pyrrho knows nothing about it. We are never without sickness. Agues have their hot and cold fits; from the effects of an ardent passion we fall again to shivering; as much as I had advanced, so much I retired:—

What an ascendant the passion of love has over the human mind.

Qualis ubi alterno procurrens gurgite pontus,
Nunc ruit ad terras, scopulosque superjacit undam
Spumeus, extremamque sinu perfundit arenam;
Nunc rapidus retro, atque æstu revoluta resorbens
Saxa, fugit, littusque vado labente relinquit.[1]

"So swelling surges, with a thundering roar,
Driv'n on each others' backs, insult the shore,
Bound o'er the rocks, encroach upon the land,
And far upon the beach heave up the sand;
Then backward rapidly they take their way,
Repulsed from upper ground, and seek the sea."

Why Montaigne did not easily embrace novel opinions.

Now, from the knowledge of this volubility of mine, I have accidentally begot in myself a certain constancy of opinions, and have not much altered those that were first and natural in me; for what appearance soever there may be in novelty, I do not easily change, for fear of losing by the bargain; and, as I am not capable of choosing, I take other men's choice, and keep myself in the station wherein God has placed me; I could not otherwise keep myself from perpetual rolling. Thus have I, by the grace of God, preserved myself entire, without anxiety or trouble of conscience, in the ancient faith of our religion, amidst so many sects and divisions as our age has produced. The writings of the ancients, the best authors I mean, being full and solid, tempt and carry me which way almost they will; he that I am reading seems always to have the most force; and I find that every one in his turn is in the right, though they contradict one another. The facility that good wits have of rendering every thing likely they would recommend, and that nothing is so strange to which they do not undertake to give colour enough to deceive such simplicity as mine, this evidently shows the weakness of their testimony. The heavens and the stars have been three thousand years in motion; all the world were of that belief till Cleanthes the Samian,[2] or, according to Theophrastus, Nicetas of Syra-

[1] *Æneid*, xi. 624.

[2] Plutarch, in his Treatise *Of the Face that appears in the Moon's Orb*, where he says that Aristarchus was of opinion that the Grecians ought to have brought Cleanthes, of Samos, to justice, and to have condemned him for blasphemy against the gods, for giving out that the heavens remained immovable, and that it was the earth which moved through the oblique

cuse,[1] took it into his head to maintain that it was the earth that moved, turning about its axis by the oblique circle of the zodiac. And Copernicus has in our times so grounded this doctrine that it very regularly serves to all astrological consequences; what use can we make of this, if not that we ought not much to care which is the true opinion? And who knows but that a third, a thousand years hence, may overthrow the two former.

> Sic volvenda ætas commutat tempora rerum:
> Quod fuit in pretio, fit nullo denique honore;
> Porro aliud succedit, et e contemptibus exit,
> Inque dies magis appetitur, floretque repertum
> Laudibus, et miro est mortales inter honore.[2]
>
> "Thus ev'ry thing is changed in course of time,
> What now is valued passes soon its prime;
> To which some other thing, despised before,
> Succeeds, and grows in vogue still more and more;
> And once received, too faint all praises seem,
> So highly it is rais'd in men's esteem."

Why new opinions are to be distrusted.

So that when any new doctrine presents itself to us, we have great reason to mistrust, and to consider that, before that was set on foot, the contrary had been generally received; and that, as that has been overthrown by this, a third invention, in time to come, may start up which may damn the second. Before the principles that Aristotle introduced were in reputation, other principles contented human reason, as these satisfy us now. What patent have these people, what particular privilege, that the career of our invention must be stopped by them, and that the possession of our whole future belief should belong to them? They are no more exempt from being thrust out of doors than their predecessors were. When any

circle of the zodiac turning round its own axis. But, as it appears elsewhere that Aristarchus of Samos believed the earth's motion, there must be some mistake in this place, as is the opinion of Ménage, who by a little variation only of Plutarch's text, makes him say, not that Aristarchus meant to accuse Cleanthes of impiety for having maintained the earth's motion; but that, on the contrary, Cleanthes would have imputed it to Aristarchus as a crime.—Ménage, *Commentary upon Diogenes*, 85.

[1] The best commentators on Cicero (*Acad.* iv. 39,) read *Hicetas* instead of *Nicetas*.

[2] Lucret. v. 275.

one presses me with a new argument, I ought to believe that what I cannot answer another can; for to believe all likelihoods that a man cannot confute is great simplicity; it would by that means come to pass that all the vulgar (and we are all of the vulgar) would have their belief as turnable as a weathercock; for their souls, being so easy to be imposed upon, and without any resistance, must of force incessantly receive other and other impressions, the last still effacing all footsteps of that which went before. He that finds himself weak ought to answer, according to practice, that he will speak with his counsel, or refer himself to the wiser, from whom he received his instruction. How long is it that physic has been practised in the world? 'Tis said that a new comer, called Paracelsus,[1] changes and overthrows the whole order of ancient rules, and maintains that, till now, it has been of no other use but to kill men. I believe he will easily make this good, but I do not think it were wisdom to venture my life in making trial of his own experience. We are not to believe every one, says the precept, because every one can say all things. A man of this profession of novelties and physical reformations not long since told me that all the ancients were notoriously mistaken in the nature and motions of the winds, which he would evidently demonstrate to me if I would give him the hearing. After I had with some patience heard his arguments, which were all full of likelihood of truth: "What, then," said I, "did those that sailed according to Theophrastus make way westward, when they had the prow towards the east? did they go sideward or backward?" "That's fortune," answered he, "but so it is that they were mistaken." I replied that I had rather follow effects than reason. Now these are things that often interfere with one another, and I have been told that in geometry

[1] A noted alchemist, born in the canton of Schwitz in 1493. Being called to a chair in the University of Bâle, he began by publicly burning the works of Avicenna and Galen, saying that the points of his hose knew as much of physic as they. He was consulted by Erasmus, and despised by almost everybody. He announced the discovery of the Philosopher's Stone, and died in the hospital at Saltzbourg, in 1541. The voluminous collection of his works is a mass of gibberish that people have long ceased to read.

(which pretends to have gained the highest point of certainty of all science) there are inevitable demonstrations found which subvert the truth of all experience; as Jacques Pelletier told me, at my own house, that he had found out two lines stretching themselves one towards the other to meet, which nevertheless he affirmed, though extended to infinity, could never arrive to touch one another.[1] And the Pyrrhonians make no other use of their arguments and their reason than to ruin the appearance of experience; and 'tis a wonder how far the suppleness of our reason has followed them in this design of controverting the evidence of effects; for they affirm that we do not move, that we do not speak, and that there is neither weight nor heat, with the same force of argument that we affirm the most likely things. Ptolemy, who was a great man, had established the bounds of this world of ours; all the ancient philosophers thought they had the measure of it, excepting some remote isles that might escape their knowledge; it had been Pyrrhonism, a thousand years ago, to doubt the science of cosmography, and the opinions that every one had received from it; it was heresy to admit the antipodes; and behold, in this age of ours, there is an infinite extent of terra firma discovered, not an island or single country, but a division of the world, nearly equal in greatness to that we knew before. The geographers of our time stick not to assure us that now all is found; all is seen:—

Nam quod adest præsto, placet, et pollere videtur;[2]

"What's present pleases, and appears the best;"

but it remains to be seen whether, as Ptolemy was therein formerly deceived upon the foundation of his reason, it were not very foolish to trust now in what these people say? And whether it is not more likely that this great body, which we call the world, is not quite another thing than what we imagine.

Plato says[3] that it changes countenance in all respects;

[1] The hyperbole, and the right lines, which not being able to reach it, have been for that reason termed *asymptotes*. —See the Conic Sections of Apollonius, book ii. prob 1 and 14.

[2] Lucret. v. 1411.

[3] In *the Politician*.

that the heavens, the stars, and the sun, have all of them sometimes motions retrograde to what we see, changing east into west. The Egyptian priests told Herodotus [1] that from the time of their first king, which was eleven thousand and odd years since (and they showed him the effigies of all their kings in statues taken from the life), the sun had four times altered his course; that the sea and the earth did alternately change into one another; that the beginning of the world is undetermined; Aristotle and Cicero both say the same; and some amongst us are of opinion that it has been from all eternity, is mortal, and renewed again by several vicissitudes; calling Solomon and Isaiah to witness; to evade those oppositions, that God has once been a creator without a creature; that he has had nothing to do, that he got rid of that idleness by putting his hand to this work; and that consequently he is subject to change. In the most famous of the Greek schools [2] the world is taken for a god, made by another god greater than he, and composed of a body, and a soul fixed in his centre, and dilating himself by musical numbers to his circumference; divine, infinitely happy, and infinitely great, infinitely wise and eternal; in him are other gods, the sea, the earth, the stars, who entertain one another with an harmonious and perpetual agitation and divine dance, sometimes meeting, sometimes retiring from one another; concealing and discovering themselves; changing their order, one while before, and another behind. Heraclitus [3] was positive that the world was composed of fire; and, by the order of destiny, was one day to be enflamed and consumed in fire, and then to be again renewed. And Apuleius [4] says of men: *Sigillatim mortales, cunctim perpetui.* "That they are mortal in particular, and immortal in general." Alexander [5] writ to his mother the narration of an

Several opinions concerning the world.

[1] Herod. iii. 142.
[2] That of Plato.
[3] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*
[4] *De Deo Socratis.*
[5] As to this letter, which is now lost, the reader may consult St. Augustin, *de Civit. Dei*, viii. 5, xii. 10; St. Cyprian, *de Vanit. Idol.* c. 21; Fabricius, *Bibl. Græca*, ii. 10, 17.—The name of the Egyptian priest mentioned in the letter was Leo. The learned Jablonski, *Prolegom. ad Panth. Ægypt.* 15, 16, considers the letter to be a forgery by one of the early Christian writers.

Egyptian priest, drawn from their monuments, testifying the antiquity of that nation to be infinite, and comprising the birth and progress of other countries. Cicero and Diodorus [1] say that in their time the Chaldees kept a register of four hundred thousand and odd years. Aristotle, Pliny,[2] and others, that Zoroaster flourished six thousand years before Plato's time. Plato says [3] that they of the city of Sais have records in writing of eight thousand years; and that the city of Athens was built a thousand years before the said city of Sais; Epicurus, that at the same time things are here in the posture we see, they are alike and in the same manner in several other worlds; which he would have delivered with greater assurance, had he seen the similitude and concordance of the new discovered world of the West Indies with ours, present and past, in so many strange examples.

In earnest, considering what is come to our knowledge from the course of this terrestrial polity, I have often wondered to see in so vast a distance of places and times such a concurrence of so great a number of popular and wild opinions, and of savage manners and beliefs, which by no means seem to proceed from our natural meditation. The human mind is a great worker of miracles! But this relation has, moreover, I know not what of extraordinary in it; 'tis found to be in names, also, and a thousand other things; for they found nations there (that, for aught we know, never heard of us) where circumcision was in use; [4] where there were states and great civil governments maintained by women only, without men; where our fasts and Lent were represented, to which was added abstinence from women; where our crosses were several ways in repute; here they were made use of to honour and adorn their sepultures, there they were erected, and particularly that of St. Andrew, to protect themselves from nocturnal visions, and to lay upon the cradles of infants against enchantments; elsewhere there was found one of

[1] Cicero, *de Divinat.* i. 19. Diod. ii. 31.
[2] *Nat. Hist.* xxx. 1.
[3] In the *Timæus.*
[4] The various stories which follow may be found in much the same terms in De Solis, *History of the Conquest of Mexico.*

wood, of very great height, which was adored for the god of rain, and this a great way in the interior; there was seen an express image of our penance priests, the use of mitres, the celibacy of priests, the art of divination by the entrails of sacrificed beasts, abstinence from all sorts of flesh and fish in their diet, the manner of priests officiating in a particular and not a vulgar language; and this fancy, that the first god was driven away by a second, his younger brother; that they were created with all sorts of necessaries and conveniences, which have since been in a degree taken from them for their sins, their territory changed, and their natural condition made worse; that they were of old overwhelmed by the inundation of water from heaven; that but few families escaped, who retired into caves on high mountains, the mouths of which they stopped so that the waters could not get in, having shut up, together with themselves, several sorts of animals; that when they perceived the rain to cease they sent out dogs, which returning clean and wet, they judged that the water was not much abated; afterwards sending out others, and seeing them return dirty, they issued out to repeople the world, which they found only full of serpents. In one place we met with the belief of a day of judgment; insomuch that they were marvellously displeased at the Spaniards for discomposing the bones of the dead, in rifling the sepultures for riches, saying that those bones so disordered could not easily rejoin; the traffic by exchange, and no other way; fairs and markets for that end; dwarfs and deformed people for the ornament of the tables of princes; the use of falconry, according to the nature of their hawks; tyrannical subsidies; nicety in gardens; dancing, tumbling tricks, music of instruments, coats of arms, tennis-courts, dice and lotteries, wherein they are sometimes so eager and hot as to stake themselves and their liberty; physic, no otherwise than by charms; the way of writing in cypher; the belief of only one first man, the father of all nations; the adoration of one God, who formerly lived a man in perfect virginity, fasting, and penitence,

preaching the laws of nature, and the ceremonies of religion, and that vanished from the world without a natural death; the theory of giants; the custom of making themselves drunk with their beverages, and drinking to the utmost; religious ornaments painted with bones and dead men's skulls; surplices, holy water sprinkled; wives and servants, who present themselves with emulation, burnt and interred with the dead husband or master; a law by which the eldest succeeds to all the estate, no part being left for the younger but obedience; the custom that, upon promotion to a certain office of great authority, the promoted is to take upon him a new name, and to leave that which he had before; another to strew lime upon the knee of the new-born child, with these words: "From dust thou camest, and to dust thou must return;" as also the art of augury. The vain shadows of our religion, which are observable in some of these examples, are testimonies of its dignity and divinity. It is not only in some sort insinuated into all the infidel nations on this side of the world, by a certain imitation, but in these barbarians also, as by a common and supernatural inspiration; for we find there the belief of purgatory, but of a new form; that which we give to the fire they give to the cold, and imagine that souls are purged and punished by the rigour of an excessive coldness. And this example puts me in mind of another pleasant diversity; for as there were there some people who delighted to unmuffle the ends of their instruments, and clipped off the prepuce after the Mahometan and Jewish manner; there were others who made so great conscience of laying it bare, that they carefully pursed it up with little strings to keep that end from peeping into the air; and of this other diversity, that whereas we, to honour kings and festivals, put on the best clothes we have; in some regions, to express their disparity and submission to their king, his subjects present themselves before him in their vilest habits, and entering his palace, throw some old tattered garment over their better apparel, to the end that all the

A new sort of purgatory.

lustre and ornament may solely be in him. But to proceed:—

If nature enclose within the bounds of her ordinary progress the beliefs, judgments, and opinions of men, as well as all other things; if they have their revolution, their season, their birth and death, like cabbage plants; if the heavens agitate and rule them at their pleasure, what magisterial and permanent authority do we attribute to them? If we experimentally see that the form of our beings depends upon the air, upon the climate, and upon the soil, where we are born, and not only the colour, the stature, the complexion, and the countenances, but moreover the very faculties of the soul itself: *Et plaga cœli non solum ad robur corporum, sed etiam animorum facit:*[1] "The climate is of great efficacy, not only to the strength of bodies, but to that of souls also," says Vegetius; and that the goddess who founded the city of Athens chose to situate it in a temperature of air fit to make men prudent, as the Egyptian priests told Solon:[2] *Athenis tenue cœlum; ex quo etiam acutiores putantur Attici; crassum Thebis; itaque pingues Thebani, et valentes:*[3] "The air of Athens is subtle and thin; whence also the Athenians are reputed to be more acute; and at Thebes more gross and thick; wherefore the Thebans are looked upon, as more heavy-witted and more strong." In such sort that, as fruits and animals grow different, men are also more or less warlike, just, temperate, and docile; here given to wine, elsewhere to theft or uncleanness; here inclined to superstition, elsewhere to unbelief; in one place to liberty, in another to servitude; capable of one science or of one art, dull or ingenious, obedient or mutinous, good or bad, according as the place where they are seated inclines them; and assume a new complexion, if removed, like trees, which was the reason why Cyrus would not grant the Persians leave to quit their rough and craggy country to remove to another more pleasant and even, saying, that fertile and tender soils made men

[1] Veget. ii. 2. [2] Plato, *Timæus* [3] Cicero, *de Fato*, c. 4.

effeminate and soft.[1] If we see one while one art and one belief flourish, and another while another, through some celestial influence; such an age to produce such natures, and to incline mankind to such and such a propension, the spirits of men one while gay and another grum, like our fields, what becomes of all those fine prerogatives we so soothe ourselves withal? Seeing that a wise man may be mistaken, and a hundred men and a hundred nations, nay, that even human nature itself, as we believe, is many ages wide in one thing or another, what assurances have we that she should cease to be mistaken, or that in this very age of ours she is not so?

The inconstancy of man's desires a good proof of his weakness.

Methinks that amongst other testimonies of our imbecility, this ought not to be forgotten, that man cannot, by his own wish and desire, find out what he wants; that not in fruition only, but in imagination and wish, we cannot agree about what we would have to satisfy and content us. Let us leave it to our own thought to cut out and make up at pleasure; it cannot so much as covet what is proper for it, and satisfy itself:—

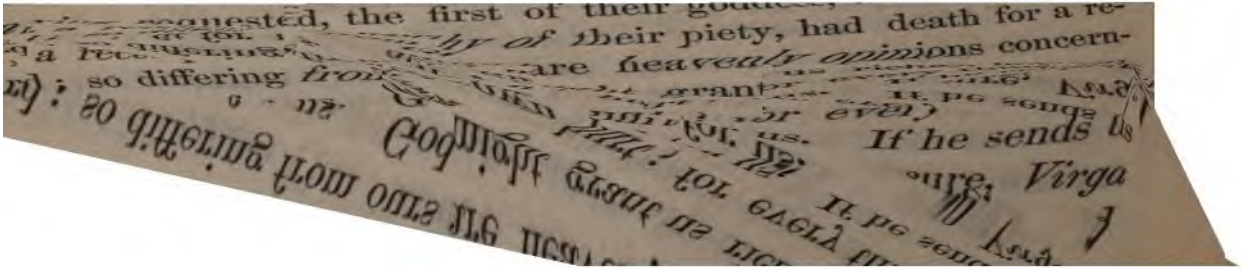
> Quid enim ratione timemus,
> Aut cupimus? Quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te
> Conatus non pœniteat, votique peracti?[2]
>
> "For what, with reason, do we speak or shun,
> What plan, how happily soe'r begun,
> That, when achieved, we do not wish undone?"

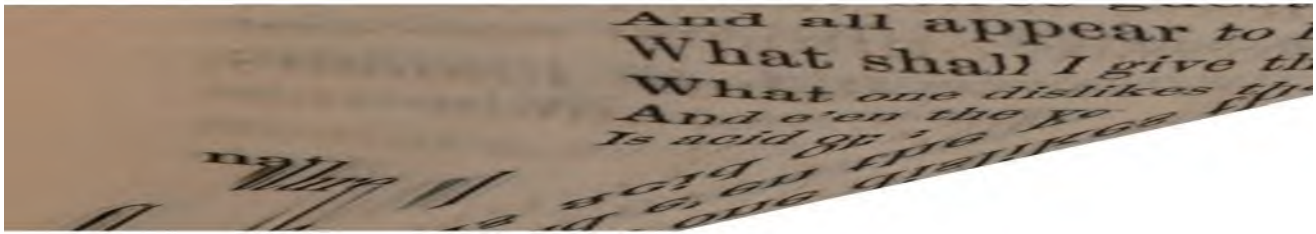
Socrates' prayer.

And therefore it was that Socrates only begged of the gods that they would give him what they knew to be best for him; and the private and public prayer of the Lacedemonians[3] was simply for good and useful things, referring the choice and election of them to the discretion of the Supreme Power:—

> Conjugium petimus, partumque uxoris; at illis
> Notum, qui pueri, qualisque futura sit uxor:[4]
>
> "We ask for wives and children; they above
> Know only, when we have them, what they'll prove:"

[1] Herod. ix. 121.
[2] Juvenal, x. 4.
[3] Plato, *Second Alcibiades*.
[4] Juvenal, x. 351.





Nil admirari, prope res est una, Numici,
Solaque, quæ possit facere et servare beatum: [1]

"Not to admire 's the only art I know
Can make us happy, and can keep us so;"

which is the drift of the Pyrrhonian sect; Aristotle [2] attributes the admiring nothing to magnanimity; and Arcesilaus said,[3] that constancy and a right inflexible state of judgment were the true good, and consent and application the sin and evil; and there, it is true, in being thus positive, and establishing a certain axiom, he quitted Pyrrhonism; for the Pyrrhonians, when they say that ataraxy,[4] which is the immobility of judgment, is the sovereign good, do not design to speak it affirmatively; but that the same motion of soul which makes them avoid precipices, and take shelter from the cold, presents them such a fancy, and makes them refuse another.

Plan of a treatise of the different sects of philosophers.

How much do I wish that, whilst I live, either some other or Justus Lipsius, the most learned man now living, of a most polite and judicious understanding, truly resembling my Turnebus, had both the will and health, and leisure sufficient, carefully and conscientiously to collect into a register, according to their divisions and classes, as many as are to be found, of the opinions of the ancient philosophers, about the subject of our being and manners, their controversies, the succession and reputation of sects; with the application of the lives of the authors and their disciples to their own precepts, in memorable accidents, and upon exemplary occasions. What a beautiful and useful work that would be! [5]

As to what remains, if it be from ourselves that we are to extract the rules of our manners, upon what a confusion do we throw ourselves! For that which our reason advises us to, as the most likely, is generally for every one to obey the

1 Horace, *Epist.* iv. 6, 1.
2 *Ethics*, iv. 8.
3 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrh. Hypot.* i. 33.
4 *Perfect repose.*
5 Justus Lipsius, a learned Belgian, who corresponded with Montaigne, executed a part of this design in his large work on Stoicism, *Manuductio ad Stoicam Philosophiam*, published 1604, twelve years after Montaigne's death; who, however, in all probability, would not have been altogether satisfied with the work.

laws of his country, as was the advice of Socrates, inspired, as he says, by a divine counsel; and by that, what would it say, but that our duty has no other rule but what is accidental? Truth ought to have a like and universal visage; if man could know equity and justice that had a body and a true being, he would not fetter it to the conditions of this country or that; it would not be from the whimsies of the Persians or Indians that virtue would receive its form. There is nothing more subject to perpetual agitation than the laws; since I was born, I have known those of the English, our neighbours, three or four times changed, not only in matters of civil regimen, which is the only thing wherein constancy may be dispensed with, but in the most important subject that can be, namely, religion, at which I am the more troubled and ashamed, because it is a nation with whom those of my province have formerly had so great familiarity and acquaintance, that there yet remains in my house some footsteps of our ancient kindred; and here with us at home, I have known a thing that was capital to become lawful; and we that hold of others are likewise, according to the chance of war, in a possibility of being one day found guilty of high-treason, both divine and human, should the justice of our arms fall into the power of injustice, and, after a few years' possession, take a quite contrary being. How could that ancient god [1] more clearly accuse the ignorance of human knowledge concerning the divine Being, and give men to understand that their religion was but a thing of their own contrivance, useful as a bond to their society, than declaring as he did to those who came to his tripod for instruction, that every one's true worship was that which he found in use in the place where he chanced to be? O God, what infinite obligation have we to the bounty of our sovereign Creator, for having disabused our belief from these wandering and arbitrary devotions, and for having seated it upon the eternal foundation of his holy word? But

Laws subject to continual changes.

[1] *Apollo.* See Xenophon, *Mem. Socrates*, i. 3, 1.

what then will philosophers say to us in this necessity? "That we follow the laws of our country;" that is to say, this floating sea of the opinions of a republic, or a prince, that will paint out justice for me in as many colours, and form it as many ways as there are changes of passions in themselves; I cannot suffer my judgment to be so flexible. What kind of virtue is that which I see one day in repute, and that to-morrow shall be in none, and which the crossing of a river makes a crime? What sort of truth can that be, which these mountains [1] limit to us, and make a lie to all the world beyond them?

Natural laws; whether unchangeable.

But they are pleasant, when, to give some certainty to the laws, they say, that there are some firm, perpetual, and immovable, which they call natural, that are imprinted in human kind by the condition of their own proper being; and of these some reckon three, some four, some more, some less; a sign that it is a mark as doubtful as the rest. Now they are so unfortunate, (for what can I call it else but misfortune that, of so infinite a number of laws, there should not be found one at least that fortune and the temerity of chance has suffered to be universally received by the consent of all nations?) they are, I say, so miserable, that of these three or four select laws, there is not so much as one that is not contradicted and disowned, not only by one nation, but by many. Now, the only likely sign, by which they can argue or infer some natural laws, is the universality of approbation; for we should, without doubt, follow with a common consent that which nature had truly ordained us; and not only every nation, but every private man, would resent the force and violence that any one should do him who would tempt him to any thing contrary to this law. But let them produce me one of this condition. Protagoras and Aristo gave no other essence to the justice of laws than the authority

The foundation of the justice of laws.

[1] "Plaisante justice qu'une riviére où une montagne borne! Vérité au decà des Pyrénées, erreur au delà."—*Pensées de Pascal.*

and opinion of the legislator; and that, these laid aside, the honest and the good lost their qualities, and remained empty names of indifferent things; Thrasymachus, in Plato,[1] is of opinion that there is no other right but the convenience of the superior. There is not any thing wherein the world is so various as in laws and customs; such a thing is abominable here which is elsewhere in esteem, as in Lacedemon dexterity in stealing; marriages between near relations, are capitally interdicted amongst us; they are elsewhere in honour:—

> Gentes esse feruntur,
> In quibus et nato genitrix, et nata parenti
> Jungitur, et pietas geminato crescit amore;[2]
>
> "There are some nations in the world, 'tis said,
> Where fathers daughters, sons their mothers wed;
> And their affections thereby higher rise,
> More firm and constant by these double ties;"

the murder of infants, the murder of fathers, the community of wives, traffic of robberies, license in all sorts of voluptuousness; in short, there is nothing so extreme that is not allowed by the custom of some nation or other.

It is credible that there are natural laws for us, as we see them in other creatures; but they are lost in us, this fine human reason everywhere so insinuating itself to govern and command, as to shuffle and confound the face of things, according to its own vanity and inconstancy: *Nihil itaque amplius nostrum est; quod nostrum dico, artis est:* "Therefore nothing is any more truly ours; what we call ours belongs to art." Subjects have divers lustres and divers considerations, and thence the diversity of opinions principally proceeds; one nation considers a subject in one aspect, and stops there: another takes it in a different point of view.

The bodies of their deceased fathers eaten by some people, and why.

There is nothing of greater horror to be imagined than for a man to eat his father; and yet the people, whose ancient custom it was so to do, looked upon it as a testimony of piety and affection,

[1] *Republic*, i. [2] Ovid, *Metam.* x. 881.

seeking thereby to give their progenitors the most worthy and honourable sepulture; storing up in themselves, and as it were in their own marrow, the bodies and relics of their fathers; and in some sort regenerating them, by transmutation into their living flesh, by means of nourishment and digestion.[1] It is easy to consider what a cruelty and abomination it must have appeared to men possessed and imbued with this superstition to throw their fathers' remains to the corruption of the earth, and the nourishment of beasts and worms.

Theft allowed by Lycurgus, and why.

Lycurgus considered in theft the vivacity, diligence, boldness, and dexterity of purloining any thing from our neighbours, and the benefit that redounded to the public that every one should look more narrowly to the conservation of what was his own; and believed that, from this double institution of assaulting and defending, advantage was to be made for military discipline (which was the principal science and virtue to which he would inure that nation), of greater consideration than the disorder and injustice of taking another man's goods.

Dionysius, the tyrant, offered Plato a robe of the Persian fashion, long, damasked, and perfumed; Plato refused it, saying, "That being born a man, he would not willingly dress himself in women's clothes; but Aristippus accepted it with this answer, "That no accoutrement could corrupt a chaste courage."[2] His friends reproaching him with meanness of spirit, for laying it no more to heart that Dionysius had spit in his face, "Fishermen," said he, "suffer themselves to be drenched with the waves of the sea from head to foot to catch a gudgeon."[3] Diogenes was washing cabbages, and seeing him pass by, "If thou couldst live on cabbage," said he, "thou wouldst not fawn upon a tyrant;" to whom Aristippus replied, "And if thou knewest how to live amongst men, thou wouldst not be washing cabbages."[4] Thus reason finds appearances for divers effects; 'tis a pot with two ears that a man may take by the right or left:—

[1] Sextus Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypotyp.* iii. 24. [2] Laertius, *in Vitâ.* [3] Id. *ib.* [4] Id. *ib.* Hor. i. 17, 1.

Bellum, o terra hospita, portas:
Bello armantur equi; bellum hæc armenta minantur.
Sed tamen idem olim curru succedere sueti
Quadrupedes, et frena jugo concordia ferre;
Spes est pacis.

"War, war is threatened from this foreign ground
(My father cried), where warlike steeds are found.
Yet, since reclaimed, to chariots they submit,
And bend to stubborn yokes, and champ the bit,
Peace may succeed to war."

Solon, being lectured by his friends not to shed powerless and unprofitable tears for the death of his son, "It is for that reason that I the more justly shed them," said he, "because they are powerless and unprofitable."[1] Socrates's wife exasperated her grief by this circumstance: "Oh, how unjustly do these wicked judges put him to death!" "Why," replied he, "hadst thou rather they should execute me justly?"[2] We have our ears bored; the Greeks looked upon that as a mark of slavery.[3] We retire in private to enjoy our wives; the Indians do it in public.[4] The Scythians immolated strangers in their temples; elsewhere temples were a refuge:—[5]

Inde furor vulgi, quod numina vicinorum
Odit quisque locus, cum solos credat habendos
Esse deos, quos ipse colit.[6]

"Thus 'tis the popular fury that creates
That all their neighbours' gods each nation hates;
Each thinks its own the genuine; in a word,
The only deities to be adored."

I have heard of a judge who, coming upon a sharp conflict betwixt Bartolus and Aldus,[7] and some point controverted with many contrarieties, writ in the margin of his book, "a question for a friend;" that is to say, that truth was there so controverted and disputed that in a like cause he might

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.
[2] Id. *ib.*
[3] Sextus Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypotyp.* iii. 24. Plutarch, *Life of Cicero*, c. 26.
[4] Sextus Empiric, *ib.* i. 14, iii. 24.
[5] Id. *ib.*
[6] Juv. xv. 37.
[7] Two celebrated jurisconsults of the fourteenth century, who, as Pasquier expresses it, "se débordèrent en torrent, en l'explication du droit." Bartolus was born at Sasso-Ferrato, in Umbria; his disciple Aldus at Perusia.

favour which of the parties he thought fit. 'Twas only for want of wit that he did not write "a question for a friend" throughout. The advocates and judges of our times find bias enough in all causes to accommodate them to what they themselves think fit. In so infinite a science, depending upon the authority of so many opinions, and so arbitrary a subject, it cannot be but that of necessity an extreme confusion of judgments must arise; there is hardly any suit so clear wherein opinions do not very much differ; what one court has determined one way another determines quite contrary, and itself contrary to that at another time. Of which we see very frequent examples, owing to that practice admitted amongst us, and which is a marvellous blemish to the ceremonious authority and lustre of our justice, of not abiding by one sentence, but running from judge to judge, and court to court, to decide one and the same cause.

As to the liberty of philosophical opinions concerning vice and virtue, 'tis not necessary to be insisted upon; therein are found many opinions that are better concealed than published to weak minds. Arcesilaus said,[1] "That in venery it was no matter where, or with whom, it was committed:" *Et obscœnas voluptates, si natura requirit, non genere, aut loco, aut ordine, sed formâ, ætate, figurâ, metiendas Epicurus putat*[2] . . . . . *ne amores quidem sanctos a sapiente alienos esse arbitrantur.*[3] . . . . . *Quæramus, ad quam usque ætatem juvenes amandi sint.*[4] "And obscene pleasures, if nature requires them," Epicurus thinks, "are not to be measured either by race, kind, place, or rank, but by age, shape, and beauty. . . . . Neither are sacred loves thought to be foreign to wise men; . . . . . we are to inquire till what age young men are to be loved." These last two stoical quotations, and the reproach that Dicæarchus threw into the teeth of Plato himself,[5] upon this account, show how much the soundest philoso-

[1] Plutarch, *Rules and Precepts of Health.* But Arcesilaus said this in reprobation of all debauchery whatsoever. He lays it down that, no matter where vice is committed, 'tis equally to be condemned.

[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 33.
[3] Id. *de Finib.* iii. 20.
[4] Seneca, *Epist.* 123.
[5] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 33 and 34.

phy indulges licenses and excesses very remote from common custom.

Laws derive their authority from possession and custom. 'Tis dangerous to trace them back to their beginning; they grow great, and ennoble themselves, like our rivers, by running on; but follow them upward to their source, 'tis but a little spring, scarce discernable, that swells thus, and thus fortifies itself by growing old. Do but consult the ancient considerations that gave the first motion to this famous torrent, so full of dignity, awe, and reverence, you will find them so light and weak that it is no wonder if these people, who weigh and reduce every thing to reason, and who admit nothing by authority, or upon trust, have their judgments often very remote, and differing from those of the public. It is no wonder if people, who take their pattern from the first image of nature, should in most of their opinions swerve from the common path; as, for example, few amongst them would have approved of the strict conditions of our marriages, and most of them have been for having wives in common, and without obligation; they would refuse our ceremonies. Chrysippus said,[1] "That a philosopher would make a dozen somersaults, aye, and without his breeches, for a dozen of olives." That philosopher would hardly have advised Clisthenes to have refused Hippoclides the fair Agarista his daughter, for having seen him stand on his head upon a table.[2] Metrocles somewhat indiscreetly broke wind backwards while in disputation, in the presence of a great auditory in his school, and kept himself hid in his own house for shame, till Crates coming to visit him, and adding to his consolations and reasons the example of his own liberty, by falling to try with him who should sound most, cured him of that scruple, and withal drew him to his own stoical sect, more free than that more reserved one of the Peripatetics, of which he had been till then.[3] That

Laws authorized by customs.

[1] Plutarch *on the Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers*, c. 31.

[2] Herod. vi. 129.

[3] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.

which we call decency, not to dare to do that in public which is decent enough to do in private, the Stoics call foppery; and to mince it, and to be so modest as to conceal and disown what nature, custom, and our desires publish and proclaim of our actions, they reputed a vice. The other thought it was to undervalue the mysteries of Venus to draw them out of the private oratory, to expose them to the view of the people; and that to bring them out from behind the curtain was to debase them. Modesty is a thing of weight; secrecy, reservation, and circumspection, are parts of esteem. Pleasure did very ingeniously when, under the mask of virtue, she sued not to be prostituted in the open streets, trodden under foot, and exposed to the public view, wanting the dignity and convenience of her private cabinets. Hence some say that to put down public stews is not only to disperse fornication into all places, that was confined to one, but moreover, by the difficulty, to incite wild and idle people to this vice:—

Mœchus es Aufidiæ, qui vir, Scævine, fuisti:
Rivalis fuerat qui tuus, ille vir est.
Cur aliena placet tibi, quæ tua non placet uxor?
Numquid securus non potes arrigere? [1]

This experience diversifies itself in a thousand examples:—

Nullus in urbe fuit totâ, qui tangere vellet
Uxorem gratis, Cæciliane, tuam,
Dum licuit: sed nunc, positis custodibus, ingens
Turba fututorum est. Ingeniosus homo es.[2]

A philosopher being taken in the very act, and asked what he was doing, coldly replied, "I am planting man;" [3] no more blushing to be so caught than if they had found him planting garlic.

It is, I suppose, out of tenderness and respect to the natural modesty of mankind that a great and religious author [4] is of opinion that this act is so necessarily obliged to privacy and shame that he cannot persuade himself there could be

[1] Martial, iii. 70.
[2] Id. i. 74.
[3] This anecdote has been generally told of Diogenes the Cynic; but Bayle, in his Dictionary, article *Hipparchia*, says there is no ground for charging him with it.
[4] St. August. *de Civit. Dei*, xiv. 20.

any absolute performance in those impudent embraces of the Cynics, but that they contented themselves to represent lascivious gestures only, to maintain the impudence of their school's profession; and that, to eject what shame had withheld and restrained, it was afterward necessary for them to withdraw into the shade. But he had not thoroughly examined their debauches; for Diogenes, playing the beast with himself in public, wished, in the presence of all that saw him, that he could fill his belly by that exercise.[1] To those who asked him why he did not find out a more commodious place to eat in than in the open street, he made answer, "Because I am hungry in the open street." The women philosophers who mixed with their sect, mixed also with their persons, in all places, without reservation; and Hipparchia was not received into Crates's society, but upon condition that she should, in all things, follow the practice and customs of his rule.[2] These philosophers set a great price upon virtue, and renounce all other discipline but the moral; and yet, in all their actions, they attributed the sovereign authority to the election of their sage, and above the laws; and gave no other curb to voluptuousness but moderation only, and the conservation of the liberty of others.

The impudence of the Cynics.

Heraclitus and Protagoras,[3] forasmuch as wine seemed bitter to the sick, and pleasant to the sound, the rudder crooked in the water, and straight when out, and such like contrary appearances as are found in subjects, argued thence that all subjects had, in themselves, the causes of these appearances; and there was some bitterness in the wine which had some sympathy with the sick man's taste, and the rudder some bending quality sympathizing with him that looks upon it in the water; and so of all the rest; which is to say, that all is in all things, and, consequently, nothing in any one; for, where all is, there is nothing.

This opinion put me in mind of the experience we have

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.
[2] Id. *ib*.
[3] Sextus Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypot.* i. 29.

that there is no sense or aspect of any thing, whether bitter or sweet, straight or crooked, that the human mind does not find out in the writings it undertakes to tumble over. Into the cleanest, purest, and most perfect words that can possibly be, how many lies and falsities have we suggested! What heresy has not there found ground and testimony sufficient to make itself embraced and defended! 'Tis for this that the authors of such errors will never depart from proof of the testimony of the interpretation of words. A person of dignity, who would approve to me, by authority, the search of the philosopher's stone, wherein he was head over ears engaged, lately alleged to me at least five or six passages of the Bible upon which, he said, he first founded his attempt, for the discharge of his conscience (for he is a divine); and, in truth, the idea was not only pleasant, but, moreover, very well accommodated to the defence of this fine science.

By this way the reputation of divining fables is acquired. There is no fortune-teller, if we have this authority, but, if a man will take the pains to tumble and toss, and narrowly to peep into all the folds and glosses of his words, he may make him, like the Sibyls, say what he will. There are so many ways of interpretation that it will be hard but that, either obliquely or in a direct line, an ingenious wit will find out, in every subject, some air that will serve for his purpose; therefore we find a cloudy and ambiguous style in so frequent and ancient use. Let the author but make himself master of that, to busy posterity about his predictions, which not only his own parts, but the accidental favour of the matter itself, may do for him; and, as to the rest, express himself, whether after a foolish or a subtle manner, somewhat obscurely or contradictorily, 'tis no matter;—a number of wits, shaking and sifting him, will bring out a great many several forms, either according to his meaning, or collateral, or contrary, to it, which will all redound to his honour; he will see himself enriched by the means of his disciples, like the regents of colleges by their pupils' yearly presents. This it is which

has given reputation to many things of no worth at all; that has brought several writings in vogue, and given them the fame of containing all sorts of matter can be desired; one and the same thing receiving a thousand and a thousand images and various considerations; nay, as many as we please.

Is it possible that Homer could design to say all that we make him say, and that he designed so many and so various figures, as that the divines, law-givers, captains, philosophers, and all sorts of men who treat of sciences, how variously and opposite soever, should indifferently quote him, and support their arguments by his authority, as the sovereign lord and master of all offices, works, and artisans, and counsellor-general of all enterprises? Whoever has had occasion for oracles and predictions has there found sufficient to serve his turn. 'Tis a wonder how many and how admirable concurrences an intelligent person, and a particular friend of mine, has there found out in favour of our religion; and cannot easily be put out of the conceit that it was Homer's design; and yet he is as well acquainted with this author as any man whatever of his time. And what he has found in favour of our religion there, very many anciently have found in favour of theirs. Do but observe how Plato is tumbled and tossed about; every one ennobling his own opinions by applying him to himself, and making him take what side they please. They draw him in, and engage him in all the new opinions the world receives; and make him, according to the different course of things, differ from himself; every one makes him disavow, according to his own sense, the manners and customs lawful in his age, because they are unlawful in ours; and all this with vivacity and power, according to the force and sprightliness of the wit of the interpreter. From the same foundation that Heraclitus and this sentence of his had, "that all things had in them those forms that we discern,"[1] Democritus drew quite

Homer the general leader of all sorts of people.

[1] Sextus Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypot.* i. 29.

a contrary conclusion,—"that objects have in them nothing that we discern in them;" and because honey is sweet to one and bitter to another, he thence argued that it was neither sweet nor bitter.[1] The Pyrrhonians would say that they knew not whether it is sweet or bitter, or whether the one or the other, or both; for these always gained the highest point of dubitation. The Cyrenaics[2] held that nothing was perceptible from without, and that that only was perceptible that inwardly touched us, as pain and pleasure; acknowledging neither sound nor colour, but certain affections only that we receive from them; and that man's judgment had no other seat. Protagoras believed that "what seems true to every one, is true to every one."[3] The Epicureans lodged all judgment in the senses, and in the knowledge of things, and in pleasure. Plato[4] would have the judgment of truth, and truth itself, derived from opinions and the senses, to belong to the wit and cogitation.

Our knowledge commences and terminates in the senses.

This discourse has put me upon the consideration of the senses, in which lies the greatest foundation and proof of our ignorance. Whatsoever is known, is doubtless known by the faculty of the knower; for, seeing the judgment proceeds from the operation of him that judges, 'tis reason that this operation be performed by his means and will, not by the constraint of another; as it would happen if we knew things by the power, and according to the law of their essence. Now all knowledge is conveyed to us by the senses; they are our masters:—

> Via qua munita fidei
> Proxima fert humanum in pectus, templaque mentis;[5]
>
> "It is the surest path that faith can find
> By which to enter human heart and mind."

Science begins by them, and is resolved into them. After all, we should know no more than a stone if we did not know there is sound, odour, light, taste, measure, weight, softness,

[1] Sextus Empiric. *Advers. Math.* c. 163.
[2] Cicero, *Acad.* iv. 7.
[3] Id. *ib.* 6.
[4] In the *Phædon* and *Theætetus*.
[5] Lucret. v. 103.

hardness, sharpness, colour, smoothness, breadth, and depth; these are the platforms and principles of the structure of all our knowledge; and, according to some, science is nothing else but sense. He that could make me contradict the senses, would have me by the throat; he could not make me go further back. The senses are the beginning and the end of human knowledge:—

> Invenies primis ab sensibus esse creatam
> Notitiam veri; neque sensus posse refelli. . . .
> Quid majore fide porro, quam sensus, haberi
> Debet?[1]
>
> "Of truth, whate'er discoveries are made,
> Are by the senses to us first conveyed;
> Nor will one sense be baffled; for on what
> Can we rely more safely than on that?"

Let us attribute to them the least we can, we must, however, of necessity grant them this, that it is by their means and mediation that all our instruction is directed. Cicero says,[2] that Chrysippus having attempted to extenuate the force and virtue of the senses, presented to himself arguments and so vehement oppositions to the contrary that he could not satisfy himself therein; whereupon Carneades, who maintained the contrary side, boasted that he would make use of the very words and arguments of Chrysippus to controvert and confute him, and therefore thus cried out against him: "O miserable! thy force has destroyed thee." There can be nothing absurd to a greater degree than to maintain that fire does not warm, that light does not shine, and that there is no weight nor solidity in iron, which are things conveyed to us by the senses; neither is there belief nor knowledge in man that can be compared to that for certainty.

A doubt whether man has all the senses.

The first consideration I have upon the subject of the senses is that I make a doubt whether or no man be furnished with all natural senses. I see several animals who live an entire and per-

[1] Lucret. iv. 480. [2] *Acad.* iv. 27.

fect life, some without sight, others without hearing; who knows whether to us also one, two, three, or many other senses may not be wanting? For if any one be wanting, our examination cannot discover the defect. 'Tis the privilege of the senses to be the utmost limit of our discovery; there is nothing beyond them that can assist us in exploration, not so much as one sense in the discovery of another:—

> An poterunt oculos aures reprehendere? an aures
> Tactus? an hunc porro tactum sapor arguet oris?
> An confutabunt nares, oculive revincent?[1]
>
> "Can ears the eyes, the touch the ears, correct?
> Or is that touch by tasting to be check'd?
> Or th' other senses, shall the nose or eyes
> Confute in their peculiar faculties?"

They all make the extremest limits of our ability:—

> Seorsum cuique potestas
> Divisa est, sua vis cuique est.[2]
>
> "Each has its power distinctly and alone,
> And every sense's power is its own."

It is impossible to make a man naturally blind conceive that he does not see; impossible to make him desire sight, or to regret his defect; for which reason we ought not to derive any assurance from the soul's being contented and satisfied with those we have; considering that it cannot be sensible herein of its infirmity and imperfection, if there be any such thing. It is impossible to say any thing to this blind man, either by reasoning, argument, or similitude, that can possess his imagination with any apprehension of light, colour, or sight; there's nothing remains behind that can push on the senses to evidence. Those that are born blind, whom we hear wish they could see, it is not that they understand what they desire; they have learned from us that they want something; that there is something to be desired that we have, which they can name indeed and speak of its effect and consequences; but yet they know not what it is, nor apprehend it at all.

[1] Lucret. iv. 488. [2] Ib. *id.* 491.

I have seen a gentleman of a good family who was born blind, or at least blind from such an age that he knows not what sight is; who is so little sensible of his defect that he makes use as we do of words proper for seeing, and applies them after a manner wholly particular and his own. They brought him a child to which he was god-father, which, having taken into his arms, "Good God," said he, "what a fine child! How beautiful to look upon! what a pretty face it has!" He will say, like one of us, "This room has a very fine prospect;—it is clear weather;—the sun shines bright." And moreover, being that hunting, tennis, and butts are our exercises, and he has heard so, he has taken a liking to them, will ride a-hunting, and believes he has as good share of the sport as we have; and will express himself as angry or pleased as the best of us all, and yet knows nothing of it but by the ear. One cries out to him, "Here's a hare!" when he is upon some even plain where he may safely ride; and afterwards, when they tell him, "The hare is killed," he will be as overjoyed and proud of it as he hears others say they are. He will take a tennis-ball in his left hand and strike it away with the racket; he will shoot with a harquebuss at random, and is contented with what his people tell him, that he is over, or wide.

Who knows whether all human kind commit not the like absurdity, for want of some sense, and that through this default the greatest part of the face of things is concealed from us? What do we know but that the difficulties which we find in several works of nature proceed hence; and that several effects of animals, which exceed our capacity, are not produced by faculty of some sense that we are defective in? and whether some of them have not by this means a life more full and entire than ours? We seize an apple with all our senses;[1] we there find redness, smoothness, odour, and sweetness; but it may have other virtues besides these, as to heat or binding, which no sense of ours can have any refer

[1] Sext. Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypotyp.* i. 14.

ence unto. Is it not likely that there are sensitive faculties in nature that are fit to judge of and to discern those which we call the occult properties in several things, as for the loadstone to attract iron; and that the want of such faculties is the cause that we are ignorant of the true essence of such things? 'Tis perhaps some particular sense that gives cocks to understand what hour it is at midnight, and when it grows to be towards day, and that makes them crow accordingly; that teaches chickens, before they have any experience of the matter, to fear a sparrow-hawk, and not a goose or a peacock, though birds of a much larger size; that cautions them against the hostile quality the cat has against them, and makes them not to fear a dog; to arm themselves against the mewing, a kind of flattering voice, of the one, and not against the barking, a shrill and threatening voice, of the other; that teaches wasps, ants, and rats, to fall upon the best pear and the best cheese before they have tasted them, and inspires the stag, elephant, and serpent, with the knowledge of a certain herb proper for their cure. There is no sense that has not a mighty dominion, and that does not by its power introduce an infinite number of knowledges. If we were defective in the intelligence of sounds, of harmony, and of the voice, it would cause an unimaginable confusion in all the rest of our science; for, besides what belongs to the proper effect of every sense, how many arguments, consequences, and conclusions do we draw to other things, by comparing one sense with another? Let an understanding man imagine human nature originally produced without the sense of seeing, and consider what ignorance and trouble such a defect would bring upon him, what a darkness and blindness in the soul; he will then see by that of how great importance to the knowledge of truth the privation of such another sense, or of two or three, should we be so deprived, would be. We have formed a truth by the consultation and concurrence of our five senses; but perhaps we should have the consent and contribution of eight or ten to make a certain discovery of it in its essence.

The sects that controvert the knowledge of man do it principally by the uncertainty and weakness of our senses; for since all knowledge is by their means and mediation conveyed unto us, if they fail in their report, if they corrupt or alter what they bring us from without, if the light which by them creeps into the soul be obscured in the passage, we have nothing else to hold by. From this extreme difficulty all these fancies proceed: "That every subject has in itself all we there find. That it has nothing in it of what we think we there find;" and that of the Epicureans, "That the sun is no bigger than 'tis judged by our sight to be:—"

Human knowledge controverted by the weakness and uncertainty of our senses.

> Quidquid id est, nihilo fertur majore figurâ,
> Quam nostris oculis quam cernimus, esse videtur:[1]
>
> "But be it what it will in our esteems,
> It is no bigger than to us it seems:"

"that the appearances which represent a body great to him that is near, and less to him that is more remote, are both true:—

> Nec tamen hic oculos falli concedimus hilum . . . .
> Proinde animi vitium hoc oculis adfingere noli:[2]
>
> "Yet that the eye's deluded we deny;
> Charge not the mind's faults, therefore, on the eye:"

"and, resolutely, that there is no deceit in the senses; that we are to lie at their mercy, and seek elsewhere reasons to excuse the difference and contradictions we there find, even to the inventing of lies and other flams, if it come to that, rather than accuse the senses." Timagoras vowed[3] that, by pressing or turning his eye, he could never perceive the light of the candle to double, and that the seeming so proceeded from the vice of opinion, and not from the instrument. The most absurd of all absurdities, with the Epicureans, is to deny the force and effect of the senses:—

[1] Lucret. v. 577. What Lucretius says here of the moon, Montaigne applies to the sun, of which, according to Epicurus's principles, the same thing may be affirmed.

[2] Lucret. iv. 390, 386

[3] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 25.

Proinde, quod in quoquo est his visum tempore, verum est.
Et, si non potuit ratio dissolvere causam,
Cur ea, quæ fuerint juxtim quadrata, procul sint
Visa rotunda; tamen præstat rationis egentem
Reddere mendose causas utriusque figuræ,
Quam manibus manifesta suis emittere quæquam,
Et violare fidem primam, et convellere tota
Fundamenta, quibus nixatur vita salusque:
Non modo enim ratio ruat omnis, vita quoque ipsa
Concidat extemplo, nisi credere sensibus ausis,
Præcipitesque locos vitare, et cætera, quæ sint
In genere hoc fugienda.[1]

" That what we see exists I will maintain,
And if our feeble reason can't explain
Why things seem square when they are very near,
And at a greater distance round appear;
'Tis better yet, for him that's at a pause,
'T' assign to either figure a false cause,
Than shock his faith, and the foundations rend
On which our safety and our life depend:
For reason not alone, but life and all,
Together will with sudden ruin fall;
Unless we trust our senses, nor despise
To shun the various dangers that arise."

This so desperate and unphilosophical advice expresses only this,—that human knowledge cannot support itself but by reason unreasonable, foolish, and mad; but that it is yet better that man, to set a greater value upon himself, make use of any other remedy, how fantastic soever, than to confess his necessary ignorance—a truth so disadvantageous to him. He cannot avoid owning that the senses are the sovereign lords of his knowledge; but they are uncertain, and falsifiable in all circumstances; 'tis there that he is to fight it out to the last; and if his just forces fail him, as they do, to supply that defect with obstinacy, temerity, and impudence. In case what the Epicureans say be true, viz: " that we have no knowledge if the senses' appearances be false; " and if that also be true which the Stoics say, " that the appearances of the senses are so false that they can furnish us with no manner of knowledge," we shall conclude, to the disadvantage of

[1] Lucret. iv. 500.

these two great dogmatical sects, that there is no science at all.

As to the error and uncertainty of the operation of the senses, every one may furnish himself with as many examples as he pleases; so ordinary are the faults and tricks they put upon us. In the echo of a valley the sound of a trumpet seems to meet us, which comes from a place behind :—

The error and uncertainty of the operation of the senses.

> Exstantesque procul medio de gurgite montes,
> Classibus inter quos liber patet exitus, idem
> Apparent, et longe divolsi licet, ingens
> Insula conjunctis tamen ex his una videtur . . .
> Et fugere ad puppim colles campique videntur,
> Quos agimus præter navim, velisque volamus . . .
> Ubi in medio nobis equus acer obhæsit
> Flumine, equi corpus transversum ferre videtur
> Vis, et in adversum flumen contrudere raptim.[1]

> " And rocks i' th' seas that proudly raise their head,
> Though far disjoined, though royal navies spread,
> Their sails between; yet if from distance shown,
> They seem an island all combin'd in one.
> Thus ships, though driven by a prosperous gale,
> Seem fix'd to sailors; those seem under sail
> That ride at anchor safe; and all admire,
> As they row by, to see the rocks retire.
> Thus, when in rapid streams my horse hath stood,
> And I look'd downward on the rolling flood;
> Though he stood still, I thought he did divide
> The headlong streams, and strive against the tide,
> And all things seem'd to move on every side."

Take a musket-ball under the forefinger, the middle finger being lapped over it, it feels so like two that a man will have much ado to persuade himself there is but one; the end of the two fingers feeling each of them one at the same time; for that the senses are very often masters of our reason, and constrain it to receive impressions which it judges and knows to be false, is frequently seen. I set aside the sense of feeling, that

That the senses sometimes impose upon our reason.

[1] Lucret. iv. 390, 398, 422.

has its functions nearer, more lively, and substantial, that so often, by the effects of the pains it helps the body to, subverts and overthrows all those fine Stoical resolutions, and compels him to cry out of his belly, who has resolutely established this doctrine in his soul—"That the colic, and all other pains and diseases, are indifferent things, not having the power to abate any thing of the sovereign felicity wherein the wise man is seated by his virtue." There is no heart so effeminate that the rattle and sound of our drums and trumpets will not inflame with courage; nor so sullen that the harmony of our music will not rouse and cheer; nor so stubborn a soul that will not feel itself struck with some reverence in considering the gloomy vastness of our churches, the variety of ornaments, and order of our ceremonies; and in hearing the solemn music of our organs, and the grace and devout harmony of our voices. Even those that come in with contempt feel a certain shivering in their hearts, and something of dread that makes them begin to doubt their opinions. For my part I do not think myself strong enough to hear an ode of Horace or Catullus sung by a beautiful young mouth without emotion; and Zeno had reason to say "that the voice was the flower of beauty."[1] One would once make me believe that a certain person, whom all we Frenchmen know, had imposed upon me in repeating some verses that he had made; that they were not the same upon paper that they were in the air; and that my eyes would make a contrary judgment to my ears; so great a power has pronunciation to give fashion and value to works that are left to the efficacy and modulation of the voice. And therefore Philoxenus was not so much to blame, hearing one giving an ill accent to some composition of his, in spurning and breaking certain earthen vessels of his, saying, "I break what is thine, because thou corruptest what is mine."[2] To what end did those men who have, with a firm resolution, destroyed them-

The voice the flower of beauty.

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ.* [2] Id. *ib.*

selves, turn away their faces that they might not see the blow that was by themselves appointed? And that those who, for their health, desire and command incisions to be made, and cauteries to be applied to them, cannot endure the sight of the preparations, instruments, and operations of the surgeon, being that the sight is not in any way to participate in the pain? Are not these proper examples to verify the authority the senses have over the imagination? 'Tis to much purpose that we know these tresses were borrowed from a page or a lackey; that this rouge came from Spain, and this pearl-powder from the Ocean Sea. Our sight will, nevertheless, compel us to confess their subject more agreeable and more lovely against all reason; for in this there is nothing of its own:—

Auferimur cultu; gemmis, auroque teguntur
Crimina; pars minima est ipsa puella sui.
Sæpe, ubi sit quod ames, inter tam multa requiras:
Decipit hac oculos ægide dives Amor.[1]

"By dress we're won; gold, gems, and rich brocades
Make up the pageant that your heart invades;
In all that glittering figure which you see,
The far least part of her own self is she;
In vain for her you love amidst such cost
You search, the mistress in such dress is lost."

What a strange power do the poets attribute to the senses, that make Narcissus so desperately in love with his own shadow,

Cunctaque miratur, quibus est mirabilis ipse;
Se cupit imprudens, et, qui probat, ipse probatur;
Dumque petit, petitur; pariterque accendit, et ardet:[2]

"Admireth all; for which to be admired;
And inconsiderately himself desir'd.
The praises which he gives his beauty claim'd,
Who seeks is sought, th' inflamer is inflam'd:"

and Pygmalion's judgment so troubled by the impression of the sight of his ivory statue that he loves and adores it as if it were a living woman!

[1] Ovid, *de Remed. Amor.* i. 343. [2] Id. *Metam. ib.* iii. 424.

Oscula dat, reddique putat: sequiturque, tenetque,
Et credit tactis digitos insidere membris;
Et metuit, pressos veniat ne livor in artus.[1]

"He kisses, and believes he's kissed again;
Seizes, and 'twixt his arms his love doth strain,
And thinks the polish'd ivory thus held
Doth to his fingers amorous pressure yield,
And has a timorous fear, lest black and blue
Should in the parts with ardour press'd ensue."

How we are deceived by the eye, the ear, &c.

Put a philosopher into a cage of small thin set bars of iron, and hang him on the top of the high tower of Notre Dame at Paris; he will see, by manifest reason, that he cannot possibly fall, and yet he will find (unless he has been used to the plumber's trade) that he cannot help but the sight of the excessive height will fright and astound him; for we have enough to do to assure ourselves in the galleries of our steeples, if they are made with open work, although they are of stone; and some there are that cannot endure so much as to think of it. Let there be a beam thrown over betwixt these two towers, of breadth sufficient to walk upon, there is no philosophical wisdom so firm that can give us the courage to walk over it as we should do upon the ground. I have often tried this upon our mountains in these parts; and though I am one who am not the most subject to be afraid, I was not able to endure to look into that infinite depth without horror and trembling, though I stood above my length from the edge of the precipice, and could not have fallen unless I would. Where I also observed that, what height soever the precipice was, provided there were some tree, or some jutting out of a rock, a little to support and divide the sight, it a little eases our fears, and gives greater assurance; as if they were things by which in falling we might have some relief; but that direct precipices we are not to look upon without being giddy; *Ut despici sine vertigine simul oculorum animique non possit:*[2] "To that

[1] Ovid, *Metam.* x. 256. The text has *loquiturque, tenetque.*

[2] Livy, xliv. 6.

one cannot look without dizziness;" which is a manifest imposture of the sight. And therefore it was that that fine philosopher[1] put out his own eyes, to free the soul from being diverted by them, and that he might philosophize at greater liberty; but, by the same rule, he should have dammed up his ears, that Theophrastus says[2] are the most dangerous instruments about us for receiving violent impressions to alter and disturb us; and, finally, should have deprived himself of all his other senses, that is to say, of his life and being; for they have all the power to command our soul and reason: *Fit etiam sæpe specie quâdam, sæpe vocum gravitate et cantibus, ut pellantur animi vehementius; sæpe etiam curâ et timore.*[3] "For it often falls out that the minds are more vehemently struck by some sight, by the quality and sound of the voice, or by singing; and ofttimes also by grief and fear." Physicians hold that there are certain complexions that are agitated by the same sounds and instruments even to fury. I have seen some who could not hear a bone gnawed under the table without impatience; and there is scarce any man who is not disturbed at the sharp and shrill noise that the file makes in grating upon the iron; as also to hear chewing near them, or to hear any one speak who has an impediment in the throat or nose, will move some people even to anger and hatred. Of what use was that piping prompter of Gracchus, who softened, raised, and moved his master's voice whilst he declaimed at Rome, if the movements and quality of the sound had not the power to move and alter the judgments of the auditory? In earnest, there is wonderful reason to keep such a clutter about the firmness of this fine piece, that suffers itself to be turned and twined by the motion and accidents of so light a wind.

The same cheat that the senses put upon our understanding they have in turn put upon them; the soul also some-

[1] *Democritus.* Cic. *de Finib.* v. 29. But Cicero only spoke of it as a thing uncertain; and Plutarch says positively that it is a falsehood. See his discourse, *of Curiosity.*

[2] Plutarch, *on Hearing.*

[3] Cicero, *de Divinat.* i. 36.

The senses altered and corrupted by the passions of the soul.

times has its revenge; they lie and contend which should most deceive one another. What we see and hear when we are transported with passion, we neither see nor hear as it is:—

Et solem geminum, et duplices se ostendere Thebas.[1]

"Thebes seems two cities, and the sun two suns."

The object that we love appears to us more beautiful than it really is;

Multimodis igitur pravas turpesque videmus
Esse in deliciis, summoque in honore vigere;[2]

"Hence 'tis that ugly things in fancied dress
Seem gay, look fair to lovers' eyes, and please;"

and that we hate more ugly; to a discontented and afflicted man the light of the day seems dark and overcast. Our senses are not only depraved, but very often stupefied by the passions of the soul; how many things do we see that we do not take notice of, if the mind be occupied with other thoughts?

In rebus quoque apertis noscere possis,
Si non advertas animum, proinde esse quasi omni
Tempore semotæ fuerint, longeque remotæ:[3]

"Nay, even in plainest things, unless the mind
Take heed, unless she sets herself to find,
The thing no more is seen, no more belov'd,
Than if the most obscure and most remov'd:"

it would appear that the soul retires within, and amuses the powers of the senses. And so both the inside and the outside of man is full of infirmity and falsehood.

The life of man compared to a dream.

They who have compared our lives to a dream were, perhaps, more in the right than they were aware of. When we dream, the soul lives, works, and exercises all its faculties, neither more nor less than when awake; but more largely and obscurely, yet not so much, neither, that the difference should be as great as betwixt night and the meridian brightness of the sun, but as

[1] *Æneid*, iv. 470. [2] Lucret. iv. 1149 [3] Id. *ib.* 809.

betwixt night and shade; there she sleeps, here she slumbers; but, whether more or less, 'tis still dark, and Cimmerian darkness. We wake sleeping, and sleep waking. I do not see so clearly in my sleep; but as to my being awake, I never found it clear enough and free from clouds; moreover, sleep, when it is profound, sometimes rocks even dreams themselves asleep; but our waking is never so sprightly that it rightly purges and dissipates those whimsies, which are waking dreams, and worse than dreams. Our reason and soul receiving those fancies and opinions that come in dreams, and authorizing the actions of our dreams with the like approbation that they do those of the day, wherefore do we not doubt whether our thought, our action, is not another sort of dream ing, and our waking a certain kind of sleep?

If the senses be our first judges, it is not ours that we are alone to consult; for, in this faculty, beasts have as great, or greater, than we; it is certain that some of them have the sense of hearing more quick than man; others that of seeing, others that of feeling, others that of touch and taste. Democritus said,[1] that the gods and brutes had the sensitive faculties more perfect than man. But betwixt the effects of their senses and ours the difference is extreme. Our spittle cleanses and dries up our wounds; it kills the serpent:—

The very great difference betwixt the effects of our senses and those of animals.

> Tantaque in his rebus distantia differitasque est,
> Ut quod aliis cibus est, aliis fuat acre venenum.
> Sæpe etenim serpens, hominis contacta salivâ,
> Disperit, ac sese mandendo conficit ipsa:[2]
>
> "And in those things the difference is so great
> That what's one's poison is another's meat;
> For serpents often have been seen, 'tis said,
> When touch'd with human spittle, to go mad,
> And bite themselves to death:"

what quality shall we attribute to our spittle? as it affects ourselves, or as it affects the serpent? By which of the two senses shall we prove the true essence that we seek for?

[1] Plutarch, *on the Opin. of the Philos.* iv. 10. [2] Lucret. iv. 640.

Pliny says [1] there are certain sea-hares in the Indies that are poison to us, and we to them; insomuch that, with the least touch, we kill them. Which shall be truly poison, the man or the fish? Which shall we believe, the fish of the man, or the man of the fish? One quality of the air infects a man, that does the ox no harm; some other infects the ox, but hurts not the man. Which of the two shall, in truth and nature, be the pestilent quality? To them who have the jaundice, all things seem yellow and paler than to us:—

> Lurida præterea fiunt, quæcunque tuentur
> Arquati.[2]
>
> "Besides, whatever jaundic'd eyes do view
> Looks pale as well as those, and yellow too."

They who are troubled with the disease that the physicians call hyposphagma—which is a suffusion of blood under the skin—see all things red and bloody.[3] What do we know but that these humours, which thus alter the operations of sight, predominate in beasts, and are usual with them? for we see some whose eyes are yellow, like us who have the jaundice; and others of a bloody colour; 'tis likely that the colours of objects seem other to them than to us. Which of the two shall make a right judgment? for it is not said that the essence of things has a relation to man only; hardness, whiteness, depth, and sharpness, have reference to the service and knowledge of animals as well as to us, and nature has equally designed them for their use. When we press down the eye, the body that we look upon we perceive to be longer and more extended;—many beasts have their eyes so pressed down; this length, therefore, is perhaps the true form of that body, and not that which our eyes give it in the usual state. If we close the lower part of the eye things appear double to us:—

> Bina lucernarum florentia lumina flammis . . .
> Et duplices hominum facies, et corpora bina.[4]

[1] *Nat. Hist.* xxxii. 1.
[2] Lucret. iv. 333.
[3] Sextus Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypotyp.* i. 14.
[4] Lucret. iv. 452.

" One lamp seems double, and the men appear
Each on two bodies double heads to bear."

If our ears be hindered, or the passage stopped with any thing, we receive the sound quite otherwise than we usually do; animals, likewise, who have either the ears hairy, or but a very little hole instead of an ear, do not, consequently, hear as we do, but receive another kind of sound.[1] We see at festivals and theatres that, opposing a painted glass of a certain colour to the light of the flambeaux, all things in the place appear to us green, yellow, or violet:—

Et vulgo faciunt id lutea russaque vela,
Et ferrugina, cum, magnis intenta theatris,
Per malos vulgata trabesque, trementia pendent;
Namque ibi consessum caveai subter, et omnem
Scenai speciem, patrum, matrumque, deorumque
Inficiunt, coguntque suo volitare colore:[2]

" Thus when pale curtains, or the deeper red,
O'er all the spacious theatre are spread,
Which mighty masts and sturdy pillars bear,
And the loose curtains wanton in the air;
Whole streams of colours from the summit flow,
The rays divide them in their passage through,
And stain the scenes, and men, and gods below:"

'tis likely that the eyes of animals, which we see to be of divers colours, produce the appearance of bodies the same with their eyes.

We should, therefore, to make a right judgment of the oppositions of the senses, be first agreed with beasts, and secondly amongst ourselves; which we by no means are, but enter into dispute every time that one hears, sees, or tastes something otherwise than another does, and contests, as much as upon any other thing, about the diversity of the images that the senses represent to us. A child, by the ordinary rule of nature, hears, sees, and talks otherwise than a man of thirty years old; and he than one of threescore. The senses are, in some, more obscure and dusky, and more open and quick in others. We receive things variously, according

[1] Sextus Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypotyp.* i. 14

[2] Lucret. iv. 73.

as we are, and according as they appear to us. Those rings which are cut out in the form of feathers, which are called *endless feathers*, no eye can discern their size, or can keep itself from the deception that on one side they enlarge, and on the other contract, and come to a point, even when the ring is being turned round the finger; yet, when you feel them, they seem all of an equal size. Now, our perception being so uncertain and so controverted, it is no more a wonder if we are told that we may declare that snow appears white to us; but that to affirm that it is in its own essence really so is more than we are able to justify; and, this foundation being shaken, all the knowledge in the world must of necessity fall to ruin. What! do our senses themselves hinder one another? A picture seems raised and embossed to the sight; in the handling it seems flat to the touch.[1] Shall we say that musk, which delights the smell, and is offensive to the taste, is agreeable or no? There are herbs and unguents proper for one part of the body, that are hurtful to another; honey is pleasant to the taste, but offensive to the sight.[2] They who, to assist their lust, used in ancient times to make use of magnifying-glasses to represent the members they were to employ bigger, by that ocular tumidity to please themselves the more;[3] to which of their senses did they give the prize,—whether to the sight, that represented the members as large and great as they would desire, or to the feeling, which represented them little and contemptible? Are they our senses that supply the subject with these different conditions, and have the subjects themselves, nevertheless, but one? As we see in the bread we eat, it is nothing but bread, but, by being eaten, it becomes bones, blood, flesh, hair, and nails:—

> Ut cibus in membra atque artus cum diditur omnes,
> Disperit, atque aliam naturam sufficit ex se;[4]
>
> "As meats, diffus'd through all the members, lose
> Their former state, and different things compose;"

[1] Sextus Empiric. *Pyrrh. Hypotyp.* i. 14.
[2] Id. *ib.*
[3] Seneca, *Nat. Quæs.* i. 16.
[4] Lucret. iii. 709.

the humidity sucked up by the root of a tree becomes trunk, leaf, and fruit;[1] and the air, being but one, is modulated, in a trumpet, to a thousand sorts of sounds; are they our senses, I would fain know, that, in like manner, form these subjects into so many divers qualities, or have they them really such in themselves? And upon this doubt what can we determine of their true essence? Moreover, since the accidents of disease, of raving, or sleep, make things appear otherwise to us than they do to the healthful, the wise, and those that are awake, is it not likely that our right posture of health and understanding, and our natural humours, have, also, wherewith to give a being to things that have a relation to their own condition, and accommodate them to themselves, as well as when they are disordered;—that health is as capable of giving them an aspect as sickness? Why has not the temperate a certain form of objects relative to it, as well as the intemperate?[2] and why may it not as well stamp it with its own character as the other? He whose mouth is out of taste, says the wine is flat; the healthful man commends its flavour, and the thirsty its briskness. Now, our condition always accommodating things to itself, and transforming them according to its own posture, we cannot know what things truly are in themselves, seeing that nothing comes to us but what is falsified and altered by the senses. Where the compass, the square, and the rule, are crooked, all propositions drawn thence, and all buildings erected by those guides, must, of necessity, be also defective; the uncertainty of our senses renders every thing uncertain that they produce:—

> Denique ut in fabricâ, si prava est regula prima,
> Normaque si fallax rectis regionibus exit,
> Et libella aliquâ si ex parte claudicat hilum;
> Omnia mendose fieri, atque obstipa necessum est,
> Prava, cubantia, prona, supina, atque absona tecta;
> Jam ruere ut quædam videantur velle, ruantque
> Prodita judiciis fallacibus omnia primis;

[1] Sextus Empiric. Pyrrh. Hypot. l. 14. [2] Id. ib.

Sic igitur ratio tibi rerum prava necesse est,
Falsaque sit, falsis quæcunque ab sensibus orta est.[1]

"But lastly, as in building, if the line
Be not exact and straight, the rule decline,
Or level false, how vain is the design!
Uneven, an ill-shap'd and tottering wall
Must rise; this part must sink, that part must fall,
Because the rules were false that fashion'd all;
Thus reason's rules are false if all commence
And rise from failing and from erring sense."

As to what remains, who can be fit to judge of and to determine those differences? As we say in controversies of religion that we must have a judge neither inclining to the one side nor the other, free from all choice and affection, which cannot be amongst Christians, just so it falls out in this; for if he be old he cannot judge of the sense of old age, being himself a party in the case; if young, there is the same exception; if healthful, sick, asleep, or awake, he is still the same incompetent judge. We must have some one exempt from all these propositions, as of things indifferent to him; and by this rule we must have a judge that never was.

It is impossible to judge definitively of a subject by the appearances we receive of it from the senses.

To judge of the appearances that we receive of subjects, we ought to have a deciding instrument; to verify this instrument we must have demonstration; to verify this demonstration an instrument; and here we are round again upon the wheel, and no further advanced. Seeing the senses cannot determine our dispute, being full of uncertainty themselves, it must then be reason that must do it; but no reason can be erected upon any other foundation than that of another reason; and so we run back to all infinity. Our fancy does not apply itself to things that are strange, but is conceived by the mediation of the senses; and the senses do not comprehend a foreign subject, but only their own passions; by which means fancy and appearance are no part of the subject, but only of the passion and sufferance of sense; which passion and subject are different things; wherefore

[1] Lucret. iv. 516.

whoever judges by appearances judges by another thing than the subject. And to say that the passions of the senses convey to the soul the quality of foreign subjects by resemblance, how can the soul and understanding be assured of this resemblance, having of itself no commerce with foreign subjects? As they who never knew Socrates cannot, when they see his picture, say it is like him. Now, whoever would, notwithstanding, judge by appearances, if it be by all, it is impossible, because they hinder one another by their contrarieties and discrepancies, as we by experience see: shall some select appearances govern the rest? you must verify this select by another select, the second by a third, and thus there will never be any end to it. Finally, there is no constant existence, neither of the objects' being nor our own; both we, and our judgments, and all mortal things, are evermore incessantly running and rolling; and consequently nothing certain can be established from the one to the other, both the judging and the judged being in a continual motion and mutation.

We have no communication with being, by reason that all human nature is always in the middle, betwixt being born and dying, giving but an obscure appearance and shadow, a weak and uncertain opinion of itself; and if, perhaps, you fix your thought to apprehend your being, it would be but like grasping water; for the more you clutch your hand to squeeze and hold what is in its own nature flowing, so much more you lose of what you would grasp and hold. So, seeing that all things are subject to pass from one change to another, reason, that there looks for a real substance, finds itself deceived, not being able to apprehend any thing that is subsistent and permanent, because that every thing is either entering into being, and is not yet arrived at it, or begins to die before it is born. Plato said,[1] that bodies had never any existence, but only birth; conceiving that Homer had made the Ocean and Thetis father and mother of the gods, to show

[1] In the *Theætetus*.

us that all things are in a perpetual fluctuation, motion, and variation; the opinion of all the philosophers, as he says, before his time, Parmenides only excepted, who would not allow things to have motion, on the power whereof he sets a mighty value. Pythagoras was of opinion that all matter was flowing and unstable; the Stoics, that there is no time present, and that what we call so is nothing but the juncture and meeting of the future and the past; Heraclitus,[1] that never any man entered twice into the same river; Epicharmus, that he who borrowed money but an hour ago does not owe it now; and that he who was invited over-night to come the next day to dinner comes nevertheless uninvited, considering that they are no more the same men, but are become others;[2] "and that there could not a mortal substance be found twice in the same condition; for, by the suddenness and quickness of the change, it one while disperses, and another reunites; it comes and goes after such a manner that what begins to be born never arrives to the perfection of being, forasmuch as that birth is never finished and never stays, as being at an end, but from the seed is evermore changing and shifting one to another; as human seed is first in the mother's womb made a formless embryo, after delivered thence a sucking infant, afterwards it becomes a boy, then a youth, then a man, and at last a decrepit old man; so that age and subsequent generation is always destroying and spoiling that which went before:—

> Mutat enim mundi naturam totius ætas,
> Ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet;
> Nec manet ulla sui similis res; omnia migrant,
> Omnia commutat natura, et vertere cogit.
>
> "For time the nature of the world translates,
> And from preceding gives all things new states;
> Nought like itself remains, but all do range,
> And nature forces every thing to change."

"And yet we foolishly fear one kind of death, whereas we

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 58, and Plutarch, *on the Signification of the word* Ei.

[2] The following passage within inverted commas is a quotation from the last mentioned tract of Plutarch, except the verses of Lucretius (v. 826).

have already passed, and do daily pass, so many others; for not only, as Heraclitus said, the death of fire is generation of air, and the death of air generation of water; but, moreover, we may more manifestly discern it in ourselves; manhood dies, and passes away when age comes on; and youth is terminated in the flower of age of a full-grown man, infancy in youth, and the first age dies in infancy; yesterday died in to-day, and to-day will die in to-morrow; and there is nothing that remains in the same state, or that is always the same thing. And that it is so let this be the proof; if we are always one and the same, how comes it to pass that we are now pleased with one thing, and by and by with another? How comes it to pass that we love or hate contrary things, that we praise or condemn them? How comes it to pass that we have different affections, and no more retain the same sentiment in the same thought? For it is not likely that without mutation we should assume other passions; and that which suffers mutation does not remain the same, and if it be not the same it is not at all; but the same that the being is does, like it, unknowingly change and alter; becoming evermore another from another thing; and consequently the natural senses abuse and deceive themselves, taking that which seems for that which is, for want of well knowing what that which is, is. But what is it then that truly is? That which is eternal; that is to say, that never had beginning, nor never shall have ending, and to which time can bring no mutation. For time is a mobile thing, and that appears as in a shadow, with a matter evermore flowing and running, without ever remaining stable and permanent; and to which belong those words, *before* and *after*, *has been*, or *shall be:* which at the first sight, evidently show that it is not a thing that is; for it were a great folly, and a manifest falsity, to say that that is which is not yet being, or that has already ceased to be. And as to these words, *present*, *instant*, and *now*, by which it seems that we principally support

Time a moving thing, without permanency.

and found the intelligence of time, reason, discovering, does presently destroy it; for it immediately divides and splits it into the *future* and *past*, being of necessity to consider it divided in two. The same happens to nature, that is measured, as to time that measures it; for she has nothing more subsisting and permanent than the other, but all things are either born, bearing, or dying. So that it were sinful to say of God, who is he only who *is*, that *he was*, or that *he shall be*;[1] for those are terms of declension, transmutation, and vicissitude, of what cannot continue or remain in being; wherefore we are to conclude that God alone *is*, not according to any measure of time, but according to an immutable and an immovable eternity, not measured by time, nor subject to any declension; before whom nothing was, and after whom nothing shall be, either more new or more recent, but a real being, that with one sole *now* fills the *for ever*, and that there is nothing that truly is but he alone; without our being able to say, *he has been*, or *shall be*; without beginning, and without end." To this so religious conclusion of a pagan I shall only add this testimony of one of the same condition, for the close of this long and tedious discourse, which would furnish me with endless matter: "What a vile and abject thing," says he,[2] "is man, if he do not raise himself above humanity!" 'Tis a good word and a profitable desire, but withal absurd; for to make the handle bigger than the hand, the cubic longer than the arm, and to hope to stride further than our legs can reach, is both impossible and monstrous; or that man should rise above himself and humanity; for he cannot see but with his eyes, nor seize but with his hold. He shall be exalted, if God will lend him an extraordinary hand; he shall exalt himself, by abandoning and renouncing his own proper means, and by suffering himself to be raised and elevated by means purely celestial. It belongs to our Christian faith, and not to the stoical virtue, to pretend to that divine and miraculous metamorphosis.

[1] See Plato, *Timæus*.

[2] Seneca, *Nat. Quæs.* i. *Præf.*

CHAPTER XIII.

OF JUDGING OF THE DEATH OF ANOTHER.

When we judge of another's constancy and courage in dying, which, without doubt, is the most remarkable action of human life, we are to take notice of one thing; which is that men very hardly believe themselves to be arrived to that period. Few men die in an opinion that it is their last hour; there is nothing wherein the flattery of hope does more delude us; it never ceases to whisper in our ears, "Others have been much sicker without dying; my condition is not so desperate as 'tis thought; and, at the worst, God has done other miracles." Which happens by reason that we set too much value upon ourselves. It seems as if the universality of things were in some measure to suffer by our dissolution, and that it did commiserate our condition; forasmuch as our depraved sight represents things to itself after a fallacious manner, and that we are of opinion they stand in as much need of us as we do of them; like people at sea, to whose notion mountains, fields, cities, heaven and earth, are tossed at the same rate they are:—

> Provehimur portu, terræque urbesque recedunt.[1]
> "Out of the port with a brisk gale we speed,
> And making way, cities and lands recede."

Whoever saw old age that did not applaud the past, and condemn the present time, laying the fault of his misery and discontent upon the world, and the manners of men?

> Jamque caput quassans, grandis suspirat arator . . . .
> Et cum tempora temporibus præsentia confert
> Præteritis, laudat fortunas sæpe parentis,
> Et crepat antiquum genus ut pietate repletum.[2]

[1] *Æneid*, iii. 72. [2] Lucret. ii. 1164.

"Now the old ploughman sighs and shakes his head,
And present times comparing with those fled,
His predecessors' happiness doth praise,
And the great piety of that old race."

The important consequences men are apt to ascribe to their death.

We make all things go along with us, whence it follows that we consider our death as a very mighty event, and that does not so easily pass, nor without the solemn consultation of the stars: *Tot circa unum caput tumultuantes deos:*[1] "So many gods in an excited condition about one man;" and so much the more think it as we more value ourselves: "What! shall so much knowledge be lost, with so much damage to the world, without a particular concern of the destinies? Does so rare and exemplary a soul cost no more the killing than one that is mean and of no use to the public? This life that protects so many others, upon which so many other lives depend, that employs so vast a number of men in his service, and that fills so many places, shall it drop off like one that hangs but by its own single thread?" None of us lays it enough to heart that we are but one; thence proceeded these words of Cæsar to his pilot, more timid than the sea that threatened him:—

Italiam si, cœlo auctore, recusas,
Me, pete: Sola tibi causa hæc est justa timoris,
Vectorem non nosse tuum; perrumpe procellas
Tutelâ secure mei:[2]

"If thou to sail to Italy decline
Under the gods' protection, trust to mine;
The only reason that thou hast to fear
Is that thou dost not know thy passenger;
But I, being now aboard, though Neptune raves,
Fear not to cut through the tempestuous waves:"

and these,—

Credit jam digna pericula Cæsar
Fatis esse suis: tantusque evertere, dixit,
Me superis labor est, parvâ quem puppe sedentem
Tam magno petiere mari?[3]

[1] M. Seneca, *Suasor.* i. 4. [2] Lucan, v. 579. [3] Id. ib. 658.

'These dangers, worthy of his destiny,
Cæsar did now believe, and then did cry,
What! is it for the gods a task so great
To overthrow me, that, to do the feat,
In a poor little bark they must be fain
Here to surprise me on the swelling main?"

and that idle fancy of the public, that the sun carried in his face mourning for his death a whole year:—

Ille etiam extincto miseratus Cæsare Romam,
Cum caput obscurâ nitidum ferrugine texit:[1]

"And pitying Rome, great Cæsar being dead,
In mourning clouds the sun e'en veil'd his head:"

and a thousand of the like, wherewith the world suffers itself to be so easily imposed upon, believing that our interests affect heaven, and that its infinity occupies itself with our most ordinary actions. *Non tanta cœlo societas nobiscum est, ut nostro fato mortalis sit ille quoque siderum fulgor.*[2] "There is no such alliance betwixt us and heaven that the brightness of the stars should be made mortal by our death."

What we ought to judge of the fortitude of many who have put themselves to death.

Now to judge of the constancy and resolution of a man that does not yet believe himself to be certainly in danger, though he really is, is not reason; and 'tis not enough that he dies in this posture, unless he purposely put himself into it for this effect. It falls out in most men that they set a good face upon the matter, and speak with great indifference, to acquire reputation, which they hope afterwards to live to enjoy. Of all that I have seen die, fortune has disposed their countenances, and no design of theirs; and even of those who in ancient times have made away with themselves, there is much to be considered whether it was a sudden or a lingering death. That cruel Roman emperor[3] said of his prisoners that he would make them feel death; and if any one killed himself in prison, "That fellow has escaped me."[4] He wanted to spin out death, and make it felt by torments.

[1] Virg. *Georgic.* i. 466.
[2] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 8.
[3] *Caligula*; see his Life, by Suetonius, c. 30.
[4] 'Twas Tiberius who said this of one Carvilius. Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius*, c. 61.

Vidimus et toto quamvis in corpore cæso
Nil animæ lethale datum, moremque nefandæ
Durum sævitiæ, pereuntis parcere morti.[1]

"And in tormented bodies we have seen
Amongst those wounds none that have mortal been,
Inhuman method of dire cruelty,
That means to kill, yet will not let men die."

In truth, it is no such great matter for a man in health and sound mind to resolve to kill himself; it is very easy to bravado before one comes to the push; insomuch that Heliogabalus, the most effeminate man in the world, amongst his most sensual pleasures, could forecast to make himself die delicately when he should be forced thereto; and, that his death might not give the lie to the rest of his life, had purposely built a sumptuous tower, the base whereof was covered and laid with planks enriched with gold and precious stones, thence to precipitate himself; and also caused cords, twisted with gold and crimson silk, to be made, wherewith to strangle himself; and a sword, with the blade of gold, to be hammered out to fall upon; and kept poison in vessels of emerald and topaz, wherewith to poison himself, according as he should like to choose one of these ways of dying:—

Impiger . . . . et fortis, virtute coactâ.[2]

"By a forced valour resolute and brave."

Yet, as to this fellow, the effeminacy of his preparations makes it more likely that his heart would have failed him had he been put to the test. But in those who, of greater resolution, have determined to dispatch themselves, we must examine whether it was at a blow, which took away the leisure of feeling the effect; for it is to be questioned whether, perceiving life by little and little to steal away, the sentiment of the body mixing itself with that of the soul, and the means of repenting being offered, whether, I say, constancy and obstinacy in so dangerous a resolve is to be found.

In the civil wars of Cæsar, Lucius Domitius being taken

[1] Lucan, iv. 178. [2] Ib. *id.* 798.

in the Abruzzi,[1] and thereupon poisoning himself, afterwards repented. It has happened, in our time, that a certain person, being resolved to die, and not having gone deep enough at the first thrust, the sensibility of the flesh opposing his arm, gave himself three or four wounds more, but could never prevail upon himself to thrust home. Whilst Plautius Silvanus was upon his trial, Urgulania, his grandmother, sent him a poniard, with which, not being able to kill himself, he made his servants cut his veins.[2] Albucilla, in Tiberius's time, having to kill himself, striking with too much tenderness, gave his adversaries opportunity to imprison and put him to death their own way;[3] and that great leader, Demosthenes, after his rout in Sicily, did the same;[4] and C. Fimbria, having struck himself too weakly, entreated his servant to dispatch him outright.[5] On the contrary, Ostorius, who could not make use of his own arm, disdained to employ that of his servant to any other use but only to hold the poniard straight and firm; and, running his breast full drive against it, thrust himself through.[6] 'Tis, in truth, a morsel that is to be swallowed without chewing, unless a man be thoroughly resolved; and yet Adrian, the emperor, made his physician mark and encircle in his pap the mortal place wherein he was to stab, to whom he had given order to kill him.[7] For this reason it was that Cæsar, being asked what death he thought to be the most desired, made answer, "The least premeditated, and the shortest."[8] If Cæsar dared to say it, it is no cowardice in me to believe it. "A short death," says Pliny,[9] "is the sovereign good hap of human life." They do not much care to discover it. No one can say that he is resolved for death who fears to trifle with it, and that cannot undergo it with

The cowardice of Domitius, and others, who seemed resolved to put themselves to death.

[1] At Corfinium, in the Abruzzi. Most of the former editions, French as well as English, read "In Prussia," a misconception arising from Montaigne's using *La Brusse*, as a translation of the Latin name for the Abruzzi, *Abrutium*. The anecdote is taken from Plutarch, *Life of Cæsar*, c. 10.

[2] Tacitus, *Annals*, iv. 22.

[3] Ib. *id.* v. 48.

[4] Plutarch, *Life of Nicias*, c. 10.

[5] Appian, *De Bell. Mithrid.* 21.

[6] Tacitus, *Annals*, xvi. 15.

[7] Xiphilin, *in Vitâ*.

[8] Suetonius, *in Vitâ*.

[9] *Nat. Hist.* vii. 53.

his eyes open. They that we see in exemplary punishments run to their death, hasten and press their execution, do it not out of resolution, but wish to give themselves no leisure to consider it; it does not trouble them to be dead, but to die;

Emori nolo, sed me esse mortuum nihili æstimo:[1]

"I would not die, but care not to be dead."

'Tis a degree of constancy, which I have experimented that I could arrive at, like those who plunge themselves into dangers, as into the sea with their eyes shut.

The constant and resolute death of Socrates,

There is nothing, in my opinion, more illustrious in the life of Socrates, than that he had thirty whole days wherein to ruminate upon the sentence of his death; to have digested it all that time with a most assured hope, without care, and without alteration, and with words and actions rather careless and indifferent, than any way stirred or discomposed by the weight of such a thought.

and of Pomponius Atticus.

That Pomponius Atticus, to whom Cicero writes so oft, being sick, caused Agrippa, his son-in-law, and two or three more of his friends, to be called to him, and told them, that having found all means practised upon him for his recovery to be in vain, and that all he did to prolong his life did also prolong and augment his pain, he was resolved to put an end both to the one and the other, desiring them to approve of his deliberation, or at least not to lose their labour in endeavouring to dissuade him.[2] Now, having chosen to destroy himself by abstinence, his disease was thereby accidentally cured, and the remedy he made use of wherewith to kill himself restored him to his perfect health. His physicians and friends, rejoicing at so happy an event, and coming to congratulate him, found themselves very much deceived, it being impossible for them to make him alter his purpose; he telling them that he must one day die, and that being now so far on his way, he would save himself

[1] Icharmus, *apud* Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 8. [2] Nepos, *in Vitâ.*

the labour of beginning again another time. This man having discovered death at leisure, was not only not discouraged at the approach of it, but provoked it; for being satisfied that he had engaged in the combat, he considered it as a piece of bravery, and that he was obliged in honour to see the end. 'Tis far beyond not fearing death to taste and relish it.

The story of the philosopher Cleanthes is very like this: he had his gums swollen and rotten; his physicians advised him to great abstinence; having fasted two days, he was so much better that they pronounced him cured, and permitted him to his ordinary course of diet; he, on the contrary, already tasting some sweetness in this faintness of his, would not be persuaded to go back, but resolved to proceed, and to finish what he had so far advanced in.[1]

Tullius Marcellinus, a young man of Rome, having a mind to anticipate the hour of his destiny, to be rid of a disease that was more trouble to him than he was willing to endure, though his physician assured him of a certain, though not sudden, cure, called a council of his friends to consult about it; "of whom some," says Seneca, "gave him the counsel which, out of unmanliness, they would have taken themselves; others, out of flattery, such as they thought he would best like; but a Stoic said thus to him: 'Do not concern thyself, Marcellinus, as if thou didst deliberate of a thing of importance; 'tis no great matter to live; thy servants and beasts live; but it is a great thing to die handsomely, wisely, and firmly. Do but think how long thou hast done the same thing, eat, drink, and sleep, drink, sleep, and eat; we incessantly wheel in the same circle. Not only ill and insupportable accidents, but even the satiety of living inclines a man to desire to die.'" Marcellinus did not stand in need of a man to advise, but of a man to assist him; his servants were afraid to meddle in the business; but this philosopher gave them to understand that domestics are suspected only when it

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.

is in doubt whether the death of the master was voluntary or no; besides that it would be of as ill example to hinder him as to kill him; forasmuch as

> Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti;[1]
> "Who makes a man to live against his will
> As cruel is as though he did him kill."

Afterwards he told Marcellinus that it would not be indecent, as the remains of feasts, when we have done, is given to the servants, so life, being ended, to distribute something to those who have been our assistants. Now Marcellinus was of a free and liberal spirit, he therefore divided a certain sum of money amongst his attendants and comforted them. As to the rest, he had no need of steel nor of blood. He was resolved to go out of this life, and not to run out of it; not to escape from death, but to essay it. And to give himself leisure to trifle with it, having forsaken all kind of nourishment, the third day following, after having caused himself to be sprinkled with warm water, he went off faintingly and by degrees, and not without some kind of pleasure, as he himself declared.[2] In earnest, such as have been acquainted with these faintings, proceeding from weakness, say that they are therein sensible of no manner of pain, but rather feel a kind of delight, as in a passage to sleep and rest. These are studied and digested deaths.

But to the end that Cato only may furnish out the whole example of virtue, it seems as if his good destiny had weakened the hand with which he gave himself the blow, seeing he had the leisure to confront and grapple with death, reinforcing his courage in the greatest danger, instead of letting it go less. And if I had been to represent him in his supreme station, I should have done it in the posture of tearing out his bloody bowels, rather than with his sword in his hand, as did the statuaries of his time; for this second murder was much more furious than the first.

[1] Horat. *de Art. Poet.* 467. [2] Seneca, *Epist.* 77.

CHAPTER XIV.

THAT THE MIND HINDERS ITSELF.

'Tis a pleasant imagination to fancy a mind exactly balanced betwixt two equal desires; for doubtless it can never pitch upon either, forasmuch as the choice and application would manifest an inequality of esteem; and were we set between the bottle and the ham with an equal appetite to drink and eat, there would doubtless be no remedy, but we must die for thirst and hunger.[1] To provide against this inconvenience, the Stoics,[2] when they are asked whence the election in our soul between two indifferent things proceeds, and what makes us, out of a great number of crowns, rather take one than another, there being no reason to incline us to such a preference, make answer that this movement of the soul is extraordinary and irregular; that it enters into us by a strange, accidental, and fortuitous impulse. It might rather, methinks, be said that nothing presents itself to us wherein there is not some difference, how little soever; and that, either by the sight or touch, there is always some choice, that, though it be imperceptibly, tempts and attracts us in like manner. Whoever shall suppose a packthread equally strong throughout, it is utterly impossible it should break; for where will you have the breaking to begin? And that it should break altogether is not in nature. Whoever also should hereunto join the geometrical propositions, that by the certainty of their demonstrations conclude the contained to be greater than the containing, the centre as great as its circumference, and that find out two lines incessantly approaching each other, and that yet can never meet, and the philoso-

[1] See Bayle's Dictionary, article *Buridan*.

[2] Plutarch, *Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers*.

pher's stone, and the quadrature of the circle, where the reason and effect are so opposite, might peradventure find some argument to second this bold saying of Pliny,[1] *Solum certum nihil esse certi, et homine nihil miserius aut superbius:* "This is only certain, there is nothing certain, and that nothing is more miserable or more proud than man."

CHAPTER XV.

THAT OUR DESIRES ARE AUGMENTED BY DIFFICULTIES.

THERE is no reason that has not its contrary, say the wisest philosophers. I was ruminating on the excellent saying one of the ancients alleges for the contempt of life: "No good can bring pleasure, but that for the loss of which we are beforehand prepared;"[2] *In æquo est dolor amissæ rei, et timor amittendæ;*[3] "The grief of losing a thing, and the fear of losing it, are equal;" meaning by that that the fruition of life cannot be truly pleasant to us if we are in fear of losing it. It might, however, be said, on the contrary, that we hug and embrace this good so much the more tenderly, and with so much greater affection, by how much we see it the less assured, and fear to have it taken from us; for as it is evident that fire burns with greater fury when cold comes to mix with it, so our wills are more obstinate by being opposed:—

> Si nunquam Danaen habuisset ahenea turris,
> Non esset Danae de Jove facta parens.[4]
>
> "A brazen tower if Danae had not had,
> She ne'er by Jove had been a mother made;"

and that there is nothing naturally so contrary to our taste as

[1] *Nat. Hist.* ii. 7.
[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 4.
[3] Id. *Epist.* 98.
[4] Ovid. *Amor.* ii. 19, 27.

satiety which proceeds from facility; nor any thing that so much whets it as rarity and difficulty: *Omnium rerum voluptas ipso, quod debet fugare, periculo crescit.*[1] "The pleasure of all things increases by the same danger that should deter it."

Galla, nega; satiatur amor, nisi gaudia torquent.[2]

"Galla, deny; be not too easily gain'd;
For love will glut with joys too soon obtain'd."

To keep love in breath, Lycurgus made a decree that the married people of Lacedemonia should never enjoy one another but by stealth; and that it should be as great a shame for them to be taken in bed together as if committing with others.[3] The difficulty of assignations, the danger of surprise, the shame of the morning,

Et languor, et silentium
. . . . . et latere
Petitus imo spiritus,[4]

"The languor, silence, and the deep-fetch'd sighs,"

these are what give the *haut goût* to the sauce. How many sports, very wantonly pleasant, arise from the cleanly and modest way of speaking of the works of love? Even pleasure itself would be heightened with pain; it is much sweeter when it smarts and has the skin rippled. The courtezan Flora said she never lay with Pompey, but she made him wear the marks of her teeth.[5]

Quod petiere, premunt arcte, faciuntque dolorem
Corporis, et dentes inlidunt sæpe labellis . . .
Et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant lædere id ipsum
Quodcunque est, rabies unde illæ germina surgunt.[6]

"What they desired they hurt, and 'midst the bliss,
Raise pain; and often, with a furious kiss,
They wound the balmy lips.
But still some sting remains, some fierce desire,
To hurt whatever 'twas that rais'd the fire."

And so it is in every thing; difficulty gives all things their

[1] Seneca, *de Benef.* vii. 9.
[2] Martial, iv. 37.
[3] Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, iii.
[4] Horace, *Epod.* xi. 9.
[5] Plutarch, *Life of Pompey*, i.
[6] Lucret. iv. 1078.

estimation. The people of the Marches of Ancona[1] more cheerfully make their vows to St. James,[2] and those of Galicia to our Lady of Loretto. They make wonderful fuss at Liege[3] about the baths of Lucca; and in Tuscany about those of Aspa; there are few Romans seen in the fencing-schools of Rome, which are full of French. The great Cato also, as well as we, nauseated his wife[4] while she was his, and longed for her when in the possession of another. I was fain to turn out an old stallion into the paddock, being he was vicious and not to be governed when he smelt a mare; the facility presently sated him, as towards his own; but towards strange mares, and the first that passed by the pale of his pasture, he would again fall to his importunate neighings and his furious heats, as before. Our appetite contemns and passes by what it has in possession, to run after that it has not:—

Transvolat in medio posita, et fugientia captat.[5]

"Thou scorn'st the girl thou may'st with ease enjoy;
And courtest those who're difficult and coy."

To forbid us any thing, is to make us have a mind to it:—

Nisi tu servare puellam
Incipis, incipiet desinere esse mea:[6]

"If thou no better guard'st that girl of thine,
She'll soon begin to be no longer mine:"

to give it wholly up to us is to beget in us contempt. Want and abundance fall into the same inconvenience:—

Tibi quod superest, mihi quod defit, dolet.[7]

"Thy superfluities do trouble thee,
And what I want and pant for troubles me."

Desire and fruition equally afflict us. The rigours of mis-

[1] In Italy, where is the celebrated shrine of our Lady of Loretto.
[2] St. James of Compostella, in Galicia.
[3] Near which are the baths of Spa, which Montaigne calls *Aspa*.
[4] Marcia, daughter of Marcius Philippus, whom the great Cato lent to his friend Hortensius See Plutarch, *Life of Cato of Utica*, who, however, does not say that Cato longed for his wife when his friend lived, but merely that he took her back when Hortensius died.
[5] Horace, *Sat.* i. 2, 108.
[6] Ovid, *Amor.* ii. 19, 47.
[7] Terence, *Phormio*, i. 3, 9.

tresses are troublesome, but facility, to say truth, is still more so; forasmuch as discontent and anger, springing from the esteem we have of the thing desired, heat and actuate love; but satiety begets disgust; 'tis a blunt, dull, stupid, tired, and slothful passion.

Si qua volet regnare diu, contemnat amantem.[1]

Contemnite, amantes:
Sic hodie veniet, si qua negavit heri.[2]

"The lady that would keep her lover still,
If she be wise, will sometimes use him ill.
And the same policy with men will do,
If they sometimes do slight their ladies too;
By which means she that yesterday said Nay
Will come and offer up herself to-day."

Why did Poppea invent the use of a mask to hide the beauties of her face, but to enhance them to her lovers?[3] Why have they veiled, even below the heels, those beauties that every one of them desires to show, and that every one of us desires to see? Why do they cover, with so many hindrances one over another, the parts where our desires and their own have their principal seat? And to what serve those great bastions of farthingales, with which our ladies fortify their haunches, but to allure our appetite and to draw us on to them, by removing them farther from us?

Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri.[4]

"And to the osiers flies herself to hide,
But doth desire to have her flight descried."

Interdum tunicâ duxit operta moram.[5]

"And often with her robe delay'd my joys."

To what use serves the artifice of this virgin modesty, this grave coldness, this severe countenance, this profession to be ignorant of things that they know better than we who instruct them in them, but to increase in us the desire to overcome, and with more gluttony subject to our appetites all this cere-

[1] Ovid, *Amor.* ii. 19, 33.
[2] Id. *ib.* 14, 19.
[3] Tacitus, *Annals*, xiii. 45.
[4] Virg. *Eclog.* iii. 65.
[5] Propert. ii. 15, 6.

mony and all these obstacles? For there is not only pleasure, but moreover glory, to intoxicate and debauch that soft sweetness and that childish modesty, and to reduce a cold and matron-like gravity to the mercy and quality of our ardent desires: 'tis a glory, say they, to triumph over modesty, chastity, and temperance; and whoever dissuades ladies from those qualities betrays both them and himself. We should believe that their hearts tremble with affright, that the very sound of our words offends the purity of their ears, that they hate us for talking so, and only yield to our importunity by a compulsive force. Beauty, all-powerful as it is, has not wherewithal to make itself relished without the mediation of these little arts. Look at Italy, where there is the most and the finest beauty to be sold, how it is nevertheless necessitated to have recourse to other means and other artifices to render itself charming; and in truth, whatever it may do, being venal and public, it remains feeble and languishing in itself; even as in virtue itself, of two like effects, we notwithstanding look upon that as the best and most worthy wherein the most trouble and hazard is proposed.

Why God suffers his church to be harassed.

'Tis an effect of the divine Providence to suffer his holy church to be afflicted, as we see it, with so many storms and troubles, by this opposition to rouse pious souls, and to awaken them from that drowsy lethargy whereinto, by so long tranquillity, they had been immerged. If we should lay the loss we have sustained in the number of those who have gone astray, in the balance against the benefit we have had by being again put in breath, and by having our zeal and force resuscitated by reason of this opposition, I know not whether the utility would not surmount the damage.

Whether the marriage tie is rendered the firmer by taking away the means of dissolving it.

We have thought to tie the nuptial knot of our marriages more fast and firm, for having taken away all means of dissolving it; but the knot of the will and affection is so much the more slackened and made loose by how much that of con-

straint is drawn closer together; and on the contrary, that which kept the marriages at Rome so long in honour and inviolate, was the liberty every one that would had to break them. They kept their wives the better, because they might part with them if they would; and in the full liberty of divorces they lived five hundred years and more before any one made use on't.[1]

Quod licet, ingratum est; quod non licet, acrius urit.[2]

"What's free to us to do we slight,
What is forbidden whets the appetite."

We might here introduce the opinion of an ancient on this occasion, that executions rather whet than dull the edge of vices; that they do not beget the care of doing well, that being the work of reason and discipline; but only a care not to be taken in doing ill:—

Latius excisæ pestis contagia serpunt:[3]

"The plague-sore, being lanc'd, th' infection spreads:"

I do not know that this is true; but this I experimentally know, that never civil government was by that means reformed; the order and regulation of manners depend upon some other expedient.

The Greek histories[4] make mention of the Argippians, neighbours to Scythia, who live without either rod or stick of offence; that not only no one attempts to attack them, but whoever can fly thither is safe, by reason of their virtue and sanctity of life, and no one is so bold as there to lay hands upon them; and they have applications made to them to determine the controversies that arise betwixt men of other countries. There is a certain nation, where the inclosures of gardens and fields they would preserve is made only of a string of cotton-yarn, and, so fenced, is more firm and secure than our hedges and

People who have lived contentedly and securely without offensive arms.

[1] Val. Maximus, ii. 1, 4, who says *five hundred and twenty years.*
[2] Ovid, *Amor.* ii. 19, 3.
[3] Rutil. *Itiner.* i. 397, in reference to the Jews and their religion.
[4] Herod. iv. 23.

ditches: *Furem signata sollicitant . . . Aperta effractarius præterit:*[1] "Things sealed up invite a thief. Housebreakers pass by open doors."

Peradventure the facility of entering my house, amongst other things, has been a means to preserve it from the violence of our civil wars; defence allures an enemy, and mistrust provokes him. I enervated the soldiers' design by depriving the exploit of danger, and all matter of military glory, which is wont to serve them for pretence and excuse. Whatever is bravely is ever honourably done, at a time when justice is dead. I render them the conquest of my house cowardly and base; it is never shut to any one that knocks. My gate has no other guard than a porter, and that of ancient custom and ceremony, who does not so much serve to defend it, as to offer it with more decency and the better grace. I have no other guard or sentinel than the stars. A gentleman would play the fool to make a show of defence, if he be not really in a condition to defend himself. He that lies open on one side is everywhere so. Our ancestors did not think of building frontier garrisons. The means of assaulting, I mean without battery or army, and of surprising our houses, increase every day, above all the means to guard them; men's wits are generally bent that way; invasion every one is concerned in; none but the rich in defence. Mine was strong for the time when it was built; I have added nothing to it of that kind, and should fear that its strength should turn against myself; to which we are to consider that a peaceable time would require it should be dismantled. There is the danger never to be able to regain it, and it would be very hard to keep it, for in intestine dissensions your valet may be of the party you fear; and where religion is the pretext, even a man's nearest relation may be distrusted with a colour of justice. The public exchequer will not maintain our domestic garrisons; it would be exhausted; we ourselves have not means to do

Montaigne safe in a defenceless house during the civil wars.

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 68.

it without ruin, or, which is more inconvenient and injurious, without ruining the people. As to the rest, you there lose all, and even your friends will be more ready to accuse your want of vigilance and your improvidence than to pity you, and the ignorance and heedlessness of your profession. That so many garrisoned houses have been lost, whereas this of mine remains, makes me apt to suspect that they were only lost by being guarded; this gives an enemy both an invitation and colour of reason; all defence shows a face of war. Let who will come to me, in God's name; but I shall not invite them. 'Tis retirement I have chosen, for my repose from war. I endeavour to withdraw this corner from the public tempest, as I also do another corner in my soul. Our war may put on what forms it will, multiply and diversify itself into new parties; for my own part, I shall not budge. Amongst so many garrisoned houses, I am the only person of my condition, that I know of, who have purely entrusted mine to the protection of Heaven, without removing either plate, deeds, or hangings. I will neither fear nor save myself by halves. If a full acknowledgment can acquire the divine favour, it will serve me to the end; if not, I have still continued long enough to render my continuance remarkable and recordable.—I have lived thirty years!

CHAPTER XVI.

OF GLORY.

THERE is the name and the thing; the name is a voice which denotes and signifies the thing; the name is no part of the thing, or of the substance; 'tis a foreign piece joined to the thing, and without it.

How the name of God may be increased.

God, who is all fulness in himself, and the height of all perfection, cannot augment or add any thing to himself within; but his name may be augmented and increased by the blessing and praise we attribute to his exterior works, which praise, seeing we cannot incorporate it in him, forasmuch as he can have no accession of good, we attribute it to his name, which is the part out of him that is nearest to us; thus is it that to God alone glory and honour appertain; and there is nothing so remote from reason as that we should go in quest of it for ourselves; for being indigent and necessitous within, our essence being imperfect, and having continual need of melioration, 'tis to this that we ought to employ all our endeavours; we are all hollow and empty; 'tis not with wind and voice that we are to fill ourselves; we want a more solid substance to repair us; a man starved with hunger would be very simple to seek rather to provide himself with a gay garment than a good meal; we are to look after that whereof we have most need. As we have it in our ordinary prayers, *Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus:*[1] "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men." We are in want of beauty, health, wisdom, virtue, and such like essential qualities; exterior ornaments should be looked after, when we have made provision for necessary things. Divinity treats amply and more pertinently of this subject, but I am not much versed in it.

Chrysippus and Diogenes[2] were the first and the most constant authors of the contempt of glory, and maintained that, amongst all pleasures, there was none more dangerous, nor more to be avoided, than that which we derive from the approbation of others. And, in truth, experience makes us sensible of many very hurtful treasons in it; there is nothing that so poisons princes as flattery, nor any thing whereby wicked men more easily obtain credit and favour with them; nor panderism so ably and usually made use of to corrupt the

[1] St. Luke, ii. 14.

[2] Cicero, *de Finib.* iii. 17.

chastity of women, than to wheedle and entertain them with their own praises; the first charm the Syrens made use of to allure Ulysses was of this nature:—

"Noble Ulysses, turn thee to this side,
Of Greece the greatest ornament and pride." [1]

These philosophers said that all the glory of the world was not worth an understanding man's holding out his finger to obtain it: [2]—

Gloria quantalibet quid erit, si gloria tantum est? [3]

"What's glory in the high'st degree,
If still it only glory be?"

I say for it alone, for it often brings several commodities along with it, for which it may be justly desired; it acquires us good-will, and renders us less subject and exposed to the injuries and insults of others, and the like. It was also one of the principal doctrines of Epicurus; for this precept of his sect, *Conceal thy life*, that forbids men to encumber themselves with offices and public negotiations, does also necessarily presuppose a contempt of glory, which is the world's approbation of those actions we produce in evidence. He that bids us conceal ourselves, and have no other concern but for ourselves, and that will not have us known to others, would much less have us honoured and glorified; and 'tis thus he advises Idomeneus not in any sort to regulate his actions by the common reputation or opinion, except to avoid the other accidental inconveniences that the contempt of men might bring upon him.

Those discourses are, in my opinion, very true and rational; but we are, I know not how, double in ourselves, which is the cause that what we believe we do not believe, and cannot disengage ourselves from what we condemn. Let us see the last and dying words of Epicurus; they are great, and worthy of such a philosopher, and yet they carry some marks of the recommendation of his name, and of that humour he had

[1] Homer, *Odyssey*, xii. 184.
[2] Cicero, *ut supra*.
[3] Juvenal, vii. 81.

decried by his precepts. Here is a letter[1] that he dictated a little before his last gasp :—

"*Epicurus to Hermachus, health.*

"Whilst I was passing over the happiest and last day of my life, I wrote this, but at the same time afflicted with such a pain in my bladder and bowels that nothing can be greater; but it was recompensed with the pleasure the remembrance of my discoveries and doctrines suggested to my soul. Now, as the affection thou hast ever from thy infancy borne towards me and philosophy requires, take upon thee the protection of Metrodorus's children."

This is the letter: and that which makes me interpret that the pleasure he says he had in his soul, concerning his discoveries, has some reference to the reputation he hoped for after his death, is the manner of his will, in which he gives order, "That Amynomachus and Timocrates, his heirs, should every January defray, for the celebration of his birthday, the expense that Hermachus should appoint; and also the expense that should be made the twentieth of every moon, in entertaining the philosophers, his friends, who should assemble in honour of the memory of him and Metrodorus."[2]

Carneades was head of the contrary opinion; and maintained that glory was to be desired for itself;[3] even as we embrace our posthumes for themselves, having no knowledge or enjoyment of them. This opinion has not failed to be more universally followed, as those commonly are that are most suitable to our inclinations. Aristotle gives it the first place amongst external goods; "avoid as two extreme vices, immoderation, either in seeking or evading it."[4] I believe, if we had the books Cicero wrote upon this subject, we should have fine harangues about

Glory desirable for itself.

[1] Cicero, *de Finib.* ii. 30. In Laertius, *Life of Epicurus*, this letter is mentioned as being addressed to Idomeneus.—Villoison (*Anec. Græc.* tom. ii. p. 159,) and Visconti (*Iconograp. Græc.* tom. i. p. 216) have shown that the name should be written *Hermarchus*.

[2] Cicero, *de Finib.* ii. 31.

[3] Id. *ib.* iii. 17.

[4] *Morals*, ii. 7.

it; for he was so madly possessed with this passion, that if he had dared, I think he could willingly have fallen into the excess that others did, that virtue itself was not to be coveted but upon the account of the honour that always attends it:— Cicero very ambitious of glory.

> Paulum sepultæ distat inertiæ
> Celata virtus:[1]
>
> "For hidden virtue's much the same as none:"

which is an opinion so false that I am vexed it could ever enter into the understanding of a man that was honoured with the name of a philosopher.

If this were true, men need not be virtuous but in public; and should be no further concerned to keep the operations of the soul, which is the true seat of virtue, regular and in order, than as they were to arrive at the knowledge of others. Is there no more in it than but only slily and with circumspection to do ill? "If thou knowest," says Carneades,[2] "of a serpent lurking in a place, where, without suspicion, a person is going to sit down, by whose death thou expectest an advantage, thou dost ill if thou dost not give him caution of his danger; and so much the more because the action is to be known by none but thyself." If we do not take up ourselves a rule of well-doing, if impunity passes with us for justice, to how many sorts of wickedness shall we every day abandon ourselves? I do not find what Sextus Peduceus did, in faithfully restoring the treasure that C. Plotius had committed to his sole secrecy and trust,[3] a thing that I have often done myself, so commendable, as I should think it an execrable baseness to have done otherwise; and I hold it of good use in our days to introduce the example of P. Sextilius Rufus, whom Cicero[4] accuses to have entered upon an inheritance contrary to his conscience, not only not against law, but even by the determination of the laws themselves; and M.

[1] Hor. *Od.* iv. 9, 29.
[2] Cicero, *de Finib.* ii. 18.
[3] Id. ib.
[4] Id. ib. 17.

Crassus and Q. Hortensius,[1] who, by reason of their authority and power, having been called in by a stranger to share in the succession of a forged will, that so he might secure his own part, satisfied themselves with having no hand in the forgery, and refused not to make their advantage and to come in for a share; secure enough if they could shroud themselves from accusations, witnesses, and the laws: *Meminerint Deum se habere testem, id est (ut ego arbitror) mentem suam.*[2] "Let them consider they have God to witness, that is (as I interpret it) their own consciences."

Virtue would be a frivolous thing if it derived its recommendation from glory.

Virtue is a very vain and frivolous thing if it derives its recommendation from glory; 'tis to no purpose that we endeavour to give it a station by itself and separate it from fortune; for what is more accidental than reputation? *Profecto fortuna in omni re dominatur: ea res cunctas ex libidine magis quam ex vero celebrat, obscuratque.*[3] "Fortune rules in all things, and advances and depresses things more out of her own will than right and justice." So to order it that actions may be known and seen is purely the work of fortune; 'tis chance that helps us to glory, according to its own temerity. I have often seen her go along before merit, and very much exceed it. He that first likened glory to a shadow did better than he was aware of; they are both of them things excellently vain; glory, also, like a shadow, goes sometimes before the body, and sometimes in length infinitely exceeds it. They that instruct gentlemen only to employ their valour for the obtaining of honour, *quasi non sit honestum quod nobilitatum non sit;*[4] "as though it were not a virtue unless ennobled;" what do they intend by that but to instruct them never to hazard themselves if they are not seen, and to observe well if there be witnesses present who may carry news of their valour; whereas a thousand occasions of well-doing present themselves when we cannot be taken notice of. How many

[1] Cicero, *de Offic.* iii. 18.
[2] Id. *ib.* 10.
[3] Sallust, *Bell Catil.* c. 8.
[4] Cicero, *ut supra*, i. 4.

brave actions are buried in the crowd of a battle? Whoever shall take upon him to notice another's behaviour in such a confusion is not very busy himself, and the testimony he shall give of his companion's deportment will be evidence against himself. *Vera et sapiens animi magnitudo, honestum illud, quod maxime naturam sequitur, in factis positum, non in gloria judicat.*[1] "True and wise magnanimity judges that the bravery which most follows nature more consists in action than glory."

All the glory that I pretend to derive from my life is that I have lived in quiet; in quiet, not according to Metrodorus, or Arcesilaus, or Aristippus, but according to myself. For seeing philosophy has not been able to find out any way to tranquillity that is good in common, let every one seek it for himself.

To what do Cæsar and Alexander owe the infinite grandeur of their renown but to fortune? How many men has she extinguished in the beginning of their progress, of whom we have no knowledge, who brought as much courage to the work as they, if their adverse hap had not stopped them short in the first sally of their arms? Amongst so many and so great dangers, I do not remember I have anywhere read that Cæsar was ever wounded; a thousand have fallen in less dangers than the least of those he went through. A great many brave actions must be expected to be performed without witness, and so lost, before one turns to account; a man is not always on the top of a breach, or at the head of an army, in the sight of his general, as upon a scaffold; a man is often surprised betwixt the hedge and the ditch; he must run the hazard of his life against a henroost, he must dislodge four rascally musketeers from a barn; he must prick out single from his party and alone make some attempt, according as necessity will have it. And whoever will observe will, I believe, find it experimentally true that occasions of the least lustre are ever the most dangerous; and

[1] Cicero, *ut supra*, i. 19

that in the wars of our own times there have more brave men been lost in affairs of little moment, and in the dispute about some little paltry fort, than in places of greater importance, and where their valour might have been more honourably employed.

Who thinks death unworthy of him if it be not on some signal occasion, instead of illustrating his death doth wilfully obscure his life, suffering in the mean time many very just occasions of hazarding himself to slip out of his hands; and every just one is illustrious enough, every man's conscience being a sufficient trumpet to him: *Gloria nostra est testimonium conscientiæ nostræ.*[1] "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." Who is only a good man that others may know it, and that he may be the better esteemed when 'tis known; who will not do well but upon condition that his virtue may be known to men, is one from whom much service is not to be expected.

Credo che 'l resto di quel verno, cose
Facesse degne di tenerne conto;
Ma fur sin da quel tempo si nascose,
Che non è colpa mia s' or non le conto;
Perche Orlando a far l' opre virtuose,
Piu ch' a narrarle poi, sempre era pronto;
Ne mai fu alcuno de' suoi fatti espresso,
Se non quando ebbe i testimoni appresso.[2]

"The rest o' th' winter, I believe, was spent
In actions worthy of eternal fame;
Which hitherto are in such darkness pent
That if I name them not I'm not to blame;
Orlando's noble mind being still more bent
To do great acts than boast him of the same;
So that no deeds of his were ever known
But those that luckily had lookers-on."

A man should go to the wars upon the account of duty, and expect the recompense that never fails brave and worthy actions, how private and concealed soever, nor even to virtuous thoughts; 'tis a satisfaction that a well-disposed con-

[1] 2 *Corin.* i. 12.

[2] Ariosto, *Orlando*, canto xi. 81.

science receives in itself at doing well. A man must be valiant for himself, and upon the account of the advantage it is to him, to have his courage seated in a sure and secure place against the assaults of fortune:—

> Virtus, repulsæ nescia sordidæ,
> Intaminatis fulget honoribus;
> Nec sumit, aut ponit secures
> Arbitrio popularis auræ.[1]
>
> "Virtue that ne'er repulse admits,
> In taintless honour glorious sits;
> Nor takes, or leaveth dignities
> At the mere noise of vulgar cries."

It is not for show that the soul is to play its part, but for ourselves within, where no eyes can see but our own; there she defends us from the fear of death, of pain, and shame itself; she there arms us against the loss of our children, friends, and fortune; and when opportunity presents itself, she leads us on to the hazards of war, *non emolumento aliquo, sed ipsius honestatis decore;*[2] "not for any profit or advantage, but for the honour of virtue;" a much greater advantage, and more worthy to be coveted and hoped for than honour and glory, which are nothing but a favourable judgment given of us.

How contemptible is the judgment of the multitude.

A dozen men must be culled out of a whole nation to judge of an acre of land; and the judgment of our inclinations and actions, the hardest and most important thing that is, we refer to the voice and determination of the rabble, the mother of ignorance, injustice, and inconstancy. Is it reasonable that the life of a wise man should depend upon the judgment of fools? *An quidquam stultius, quam, quos singulos contemnas, eos aliquid putare esse universos?*[3] "Can any thing be more foolish than to think that those you despise singly can be any other than despicable when joined together?" He that makes it his business to please them will never have done;

[1] Horace, *Od.* iii. 2, 17.
[2] Cicero, *de Finib.* i. 10.
[3] Id. Tusc. Quæs. v. 36.

'tis a mark that never is to be reached or hit: *Nil tam inestimabile est, quam animi multitudinis.*[1] "Nothing is so uncertain as the minds of the multitude." Demetrius[2] pleasantly said, of the voice of the people, that he made no more account of that which came from above than of that which came from below. Cicero says more: *Ego hoc judico, si quando turpe non sit, tamen non esse non turpe, quum id a multitudine laudetur.*[3] "I am of opinion that, though a thing be not foul in itself, yet it cannot but become so when commended by the multitude." No art, no activity of wit, could conduct our steps so as to follow so wandering and irregular a guide; in this windy confusion of noise, vulgar reports, and opinions, that drive us on, no way worth any thing can be chosen. Let us not purpose to ourselves so floating and wavering an end; let us follow constantly after reason; let the public approbation follow us there, if it will; and as it wholly depends upon fortune, we have no reason sooner to expect it by any other way than that. Though I would not follow the straight way because it is straight, I would, however, follow it for having experimentally found that, at the end of the reckoning, 'tis commonly the most happy, and of the greatest utility: *Dedit hoc providentia hominibus manus, ut honesta magis juvarent.*[4] "This gift providence has given to man, that honest things should be the most delightful." The mariner of old said to Neptune, in a great tempest: "O god, thou mayest save me if thou wilt, and if thou wilt, thou mayest destroy me; but, whether or no, I will steer my rudder true."[5] I have seen, in my time, a thousand men of supple and ambiguous natures, and that no one doubted but they were more worldly wise than I, ruined where I have saved myself:—

Risi successu posse carere dolos.[6]
"I laugh'd to see their unsuccessful wiles."

[1] Livy, xxxi. 34.
[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 91. Demetrius was a Cynic philosopher, famous at Rome in the reign of Nero.
[3] *De Finib.* ii. 15.
[4] Quintil. *Instit. Orat.* i. 12.
[5] Seneca, *Epist.* 85.
[6] Ovid, *Heroid.* i. 18. The text, how-

Paulus Æmilius, going on his glorious expedition to Macedonia, above all things charged the people of Rome not to speak of his actions during his absence.[1] The license of judgments is a great obstacle to great affairs! Forasmuch as every one has not the firmness of Fabius against adverse and injurious voices, who rather suffered his authority to be dissected by the vain fancies of men than to fulfil less well his charge, with a more favourable reputation and popular applause.

Praise and reputation set at too high a price.

There is I know not what natural sweetness in hearing one's self commended; but we are a great deal too fond of it:—

> Laudari haud metuam, neque enim mihi cornea fibra est;
> Sed recti finemque, extremumque esse recuso,
> "Euge" tuum, et "belle."[2]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Think not
> That all your praises I should treat with scorn;
> No, no! my nerves are n't made as dull as horn;
> But that your 'Bravos!' and that senseless cry,
> Prove that all's right and perfect I deny."

I care not so much what I am in the opinion of others, as what I am in my own; I would be rich of myself, and not by borrowing. Strangers see nothing but events and outward appearances; everybody can set a good face on the matter when they are full of trembling and terror within; they do not see my heart, they see but my countenance. 'Tis with good reason that men decry the hypocrisy that is in war; for what is more easy to an old soldier than to shift in time of danger, and to counterfeit bravely when he has no more heart than a chicken? There are so many ways to avoid hazarding a man's own person, that we have deceived the world a thousand times before we come to be engaged in a real danger, and even then, finding ourselves in an inevitable necessity of doing something, we can make a shift for

ever, has *flebam successu*—"I wept to see," &c.

[1] Livy, xliv. 22.

[2] Pers. i. 47. *Haud* does not occur in the text.

that time to conceal our apprehensions by setting a good face on the business, though the heart beats within; and had we the use of the Platonic ring,[1] which renders those invisible that wear it, if turned inwards towards the palm of the hand, a great many would very often hide themselves when they ought most to appear, and would repent being placed in so honourable a post, where necessity made them brave.

Falsus honor juvat, et mendax infamia terret
Quem, nisi mendosum et mendacem?[2]

"False honour pleases, and base calumny
Affrights,—whom? Those that love to hear a lie."

Thus we see how all the judgments that are founded upon external appearances are marvellously uncertain and doubtful, and that there is no so certain testimony as every one is to himself. In these matters how many drummer-boys are companions of our glory? He that stands firm in an open trench, what does he in that do more than fifty poor pioneers, who open him the way, and cover it with their own bodies, for fivepence a day pay, have done before him?

Non, quidquid turbida Roma
Elevet, accedas; examenque improbum in illa
Castiges trutina: nec te quæsiveris extra.[3]

"Follow not turbid Rome's so senseless ways
Of loading ev'ry thing that's done with praise;
Of that false balance trust not to the test,
And out of thee make of thyself no quest."

The dispersing and scattering our names into many mouths we call making them more great; we will have them there well received, and that this increase turn to their advantage, which is all that can be excusable in this design. But the excess of this disease proceeds so far that many covet to have a name, be it what it will. Trogus Pompeius[4] says of Herostratus, and Titus Livius[5] of Manlius Capitolinus, that

[1] *The ring of Gyges.* Plato, *Republic.* ii. 3. Cic. *de Offic.* iii. 9.
[2] Horace, *Epist.* i. 16, 39.
[3] Persius, i. 5.
[4] The instance mentioned by Trogus (*apud* John of Salisbury, viii. 5) is Pausanias, who killed Philip of Macedon; the example of Herostratus is cited by John of Salisbury, not from Trogus as abridged by Justin, but from Val. Max. viii. 14, *ext.* 5.
[5] Livy, vi. 11.

they were more ambitious of a great reputation than of a good one. This vice is very common; we are more solicitous that men speak of us, than how they speak; and 'tis enough for us that our names are often mentioned, be it after what manner it will; it seems that to be known is in some sort to have a man's life and its duration in another man's keeping. I for my part hold that I am only in myself; and that other life of mine, which lies in the knowledge of my friends, considering it naked and simply in itself, I know very well that I am sensible of no fruit or enjoyment of it, but by the vanity of a fantastic opinion; and when I shall be dead I shall be much less sensible of it, and shall withal absolutely lose the use of those real advantages that sometimes accidentally follow it. I shall have no more handle whereby to take hold of reputation, or whereby it may take hold of me; for to expect that my name should receive it in the first place, I have no name that is enough my own; of two that I have, one is common to all my race, and even to others also; there is one family at Paris and another at Montpelier whose surname is Montaigne; another in Brittany and Xaintonge called De la Montaigne. The transposition of one syllable only is enough to ravel our affairs, so that I shall peradventure share in their glory, and they shall partake of my shame; and moreover my ancestors were formerly surnamed Eyquem, a name wherein a family well known in England at this day is concerned; as to my other name, every one can take it that will; and so, perhaps, I may honour a porter in my own stead. And besides, though I had a particular distinction by myself, what can it distinguish when I am no more? Can it point out and favour inanity?

> Hunc levior cippus non imprimit ossa.
> Laudat posteritas, nunc non e manibus illis,
> Nunc non e tumulo, fortunaque favilla,
> Nascuntur violæ? [1]

[1] Pers. i. 37. Montaigne has changed the sense of the Latin, and substituted *posteritas* for *convivæ*.

" Will, after this, thy monumental stones
Press with less weight upon thy rotted bones?
Posterity commends thee: happy thou!
But will thy manes such a gift bestow
As to make violets from thy ashes grow? "

but of this I have spoken elsewhere. For the rest, in a whole battle, where ten thousand men are maimed or killed, there are not fifteen that are taken notice of; it must needs be some very eminent greatness, or some consequence of great importance that fortune has added to it, that must signalize a private action, not of a harquebusier only, but of a captain; for to kill a man, or two, or ten, to expose a man's self bravely to the peril of death, is, indeed, something in every one of us, because we there hazard all; but for the world's concern, they are things so ordinary, and so many of them are every day seen, and there must of necessity be so many of the same kind to produce any notable effect, that we cannot thence expect any particular renown;

Casus multus hic cognitus, ac jam
Tritus, et e medio fortunæ ductus acervo.[1]

" The action once was fam'd; but now, worn old,
With common acts of fortune is enroll'd."

Of so many thousands and thousands of valiant men that have died within these fifteen hundred years in France, with their swords in their hands, not a hundred have come to our knowledge; the memory, not of commanders only, but of battles and victories, is buried and gone; the fortunes of above half the world, for want of a record, stir not from their place and vanish without duration. If I had unknown events in my possession, I think I could with great ease outdo those that are recorded, in all sorts of examples. Is it not strange that even of the Greeks and Romans, amongst so many writers and witnesses, and so many rare and noble exploits, so few are arrived at our knowledge?

[1] Juvenal, xiii. 9.

Ad nos vix tenuis famæ perlabitur aura.[1]

"Which fame to these our times has scarce brought down."

It will be much if a hundred years hence it be remembered, in general, that in our times there were civil wars in France. The Lacedemonians, entering into battle, sacrificed to the muses,[2] to the end that their actions might be well and worthily written; looking upon it as a divine, and no ordinary, favour, that brave acts should find witnesses that could give them life and memory. Do we expect that at every musket-shot we receive, and at every hazard we run, there must be a registrar ready to record it? Not to say that a hundred registrars may enroll them, whose commentaries will not last above three days, and shall never come to the sight of any one. We have not the thousandth part of the ancient writings; 'tis fortune that gives them a shorter or longer life, according to her favour; and 'tis lawful to doubt whether those we have be not the worst, not having seen the rest. Men do not write histories of things of so little moment; a man must have been general in the conquest of an empire, he must have won two and fifty set battles, and always been the weaker in number, as Cæsar did; ten thousand brave fellows, and several great captains, lost their lives bravely in his service, whose names lasted no longer than their wives and children lived:—

The muses sacrificed unto by the Lacedemonians, and why.

Quos fama obscura recondit.[3]

"Whom time has not deliver'd o'er to fame."

Even those we see behave themselves the best, three months or three years after they have been knocked on the head are no more spoken of than if they had never been. Whoever will consider, with just measure and proportion, of what kind of men, and of what sort of actions, the glory maintains itself in the

What sort of glory that is, the remembrance of which is preserved in books.

[1] *Æneid*, vii. 646.
[2] Plutarch, *Apoth. of the Lacedemon.*
[3] *Æneid*, v. 302

memory of books, will find that there are very few actions and very few persons of our times, who can there pretend any right. How many worthy men have we seen survive their own reputation, who have seen and suffered the honour and glory, most justly acquired in their youth, extinguished in their own presence? And for three years of this fantastic and imaginary life we must go and throw away our true and essential life, and engage ourselves in the risk of perpetual death. The sages propose to themselves a nobler and more just end in so important an enterprise: *Recte facti fecisse merces est; officii fructus ipsum officium est.*[1] "The reward of a thing well done is to have done it; the fruit of a good office is the office itself." It were, perhaps, excusable in a painter or other artisan, or in a rhetorician or grammarian, to endeavour to raise themselves a name by their works; but the actions of virtue are too noble in themselves to seek any other reward than from their own worth, and especially to seek it in the vanity of human judgments.

Why the public approbation ought to be courted.

If this false opinion, nevertheless, be of that use to the public as to keep men in their duty; if the people are thereby stirred up to virtue; if princes are touched to see the world bless the memory of Trajan and abominate that of Nero; if it moves them to see the name of that great scoundrel, once so terrible and feared, so freely cursed and reviled by every schoolboy that lights upon it; let it, in the name of God, increase, and be as much as possible nursed up, cherished, and countenanced amongst us. And Plato,[2] bending his whole endeavour to make his citizens virtuous, advises them not to despise the good esteem of the people; and says, that it falls out by a certain divine inspiration that even the wicked themselves ofttimes, as well by word as opinion, can rightly distinguish the virtuous from the wicked. This person and his tutor are both marvellous bold artificers, everywhere to add divine operations and revelations where human force is

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 81.

[2] *Laws*, xii.

wanting: *Ut tragici poetæ confugiunt ad deum, quum explicare argumenti exitum non possunt:*[1] "As the tragic poets have recourse to a god, when they cannot compass the catastrophe of their piece;" and, perhaps, for this reason it was, that Timon, railing at him, called him the great forger of miracles.[2] Seeing that men, by their insufficiency, cannot pay themselves well enough with current money, let the counterfeit be superadded. 'Tis a way that has been practised by all the legislators; and there is no government that has not had some mixture either of ceremonial vanity or false opinion, that serves for a curb to keep the people in their duty. 'Tis for this that most of them have their fabulous originals and beginnings, so enriched with supernatural mysteries; 'tis this that has given credit to bastard religions, and caused them to be countenanced by men of understanding; and for this that Numa and Sertorius, to possess their men with a better opinion of them, fed them with this foppery; one that the nymph Egeria, the other that his white hind, brought them all their counsels from the gods; and the authority that Numa gave to his laws, under the title of the patronage of this goddess, Zoroaster, legislator of the Bactrians and Persians, gave to his under the name of the god Oromazis; Trismegistus, legislator of the Egyptians, under that of Mercury; Xamolxis, legislator of the Scythians, under that of Vesta; Charondas, legislator of the Chalcedonians, under that of Saturn; Minos, legislator of the Cretans, under that of Jupiter; Lycurgus, legislator of the Lacedemonians, under that of Apollo; and Draco and Solon, legislators of the Athenians, under that of Minerva; and every government has a god at the head of it; others falsely, that truly which Moses set over the Jews at their departure out of Egypt. The religion of the Bedouins, as the Sire de Joinville reports,[3] amongst other things, enjoined a belief that the soul of him amongst them who died for his prince went into another

[1] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* i. 20.
[2] Laertius, *Life of Plato*, iii. 26.
[3] In his *Memoirs*, c. 58

more happy body, more beautiful than the former; by which means they much more willingly ventured their lives;

> In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
> Mortis, et ignavum est redituræ parcere vitæ.[1]
>
> "Men covet wounds, and strive death to embrace,
> To save a life that will return is base."

This is a very salutary, though an erroneous, belief. Every nation has many such examples of its own; but this subject would require a treatise by itself.

The difference betwixt that which the ladies term honour and their duty.

To add one word more to my former discourse, I would advise the ladies no more to call that honour which is but their duty: *Ut enim consuetudo loquitur, id solum dicitur honestum quod est populari fama gloriosum;*[2] "According to the vulgar notion, which only approves that for laudable that is glorious by the public voice;" their duty is the mark, their honour but the outward rind; neither would I advise them to give that excuse in payment for their denials; for I presuppose that their intentions, their desire and will, which are things wherein their honour is not at all concerned, forasmuch as nothing appears without, are much better regulated than the effects:—

> Quæ, quia non liceat, non facit, illa facit:[3]
> "She who not sins, whom mere restraint keeps in,
> Though she forbear the act, commits the sin:"

the offence both towards God and in the conscience is as great to desire as to do; and besides, they are actions so private and secret of themselves as would be easily enough kept from the knowledge of others, wherein the honour consists, if they had not another respect to their duty, and the affection they bear to chastity for itself. Every woman of honour will much rather choose to lose her honour than to hurt her conscience.

[1] Lucan, i. 461. [2] Cicero, *de Finib.* ii. 15. [3] Ovid, *Amor.* iii. 4, 4.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF PRESUMPTION.

THERE is another sort of glory, which is the having too good an opinion of our own worth. 'Tis an inconsiderate affection with which we flatter ourselves, and that represents us to ourselves different from what we truly are; like the passion of love, that lends beauties and graces to the person beloved, and that makes those who are caught with it, with a depraved and corrupt judgment, consider the thing they love more perfect than it is.

I would not, nevertheless, for fear of failing on the other side, that a man should not know himself aright, or think himself less than he is; the judgment ought in all things to keep itself upright and just; 'tis all the reason in the world he should discern in himself, as well as in others, what truth sets before him; if he be Cæsar, let him boldly think himself the greatest captain in the world. We are nothing but ceremony; ceremony carries us away, and we leave the substance of things; we hold by the branches, and quit the trunk and the body; we have taught the ladies to blush when they hear that but named which they are not at all afraid to do; we dare not call our members by their right names, yet are not afraid to employ them in all sorts of debauches; ceremony forbids us to express by words things that are lawful and natural, and we obey it; reason forbids us to do things unlawful and ill, and nobody obeys it. I find myself here fettered by the laws of ceremony; for it neither permits a man to speak well of himself nor ill. We will leave her there for this time.

The fear of being guilty of presumption ought not to give us too mean an opinion of ourselves, nor to hinder us from making ourselves known.

They whom fortune (call it good or ill) has made to pass

their lives in some eminent degree, may, by their public actions, manifest what they are; but they whom she has only employed in the crowd, and of whom nobody will say a word, unless they speak themselves, are to be excused if they take the boldness to speak of themselves to such whose interest it is to know them; by the example of Lucilius,—

> Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
> Credebat libris, neque si male cesserat, usquam
> Decurrens alio, neque si bene: quo fit, ut omnis
> Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
> Vita senis;[1]

> "His way was in his books to speak his mind,
> As freely as his secrets he would tell
> To a tried friend, and, take it ill or well,
> He held his custom. Hence it came to pass
> The old man's life is there, as in a glass;"

he always committed to paper his actions and thoughts, and there portrayed himself such as he found himself to be: *nec id Rutilio et Scauro citra fidem aut obtrectationi fuit.*[2] "Nor were Rutilius or Scarus misbelieved or condemned for so doing."

I remember, then, that from my infancy there was observed in me I know not what kind of carriage and behaviour, that seemed to relish of pride and arrogance. I will say this by the way, that it is not inconvenient to have conditions and propensities so proper and so incorporated into us that we have not the means to feel and be aware of them; and of such natural inclinations the body will readily retain some bent, without our knowledge or consent. It was a certain affectation becoming to his beauty that made Alexander carry his head on one side, and Alcibiades to lisp; Julius Cæsar[3] scratched his head with one finger, which is the fashion of a man full of troublesome thoughts; and Cicero, as I take it, was wont to wrinkle up his nose, a sign of a man given to scoffing; such motions as these may imper-

[1] Horace, *Sat.* ii. 1, 30.
[2] Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. 1.
[3] Plutarch, *Life of Cæsar*, c. 1. The same thing is said of Pompey. Senec. *Controv.* iii. 19.

ceptibly happen in us. There are other artificial ones which I meddle not with, as salutations and congees, by which men for the most part unjustly acquire the reputation of being humble and courteous; one may be humble, out of pride. I am prodigal enough of my hat, especially in summer, and never am so saluted but I pay it again, from persons of what quality soever, unless they be in my own pay. I should make it my request, to some princes that I know, that they should be more sparing of that ceremony, and bestow that courtesy where it is more due; for being so indiscreetly and indifferently conferred on all, they are thrown away to no purpose; if they be without respect of persons, they lose their effect. Amongst irregular countenances, let us not forget that severe one of the Emperor Constantius, who always in public held his head quite upright, without bending or turning on either side, not so much as to look upon those who saluted him on one side, planting his body in a stiff, immovable posture, without suffering it to yield to the motion of his coach; not daring so much as to spit, blow his nose, or wipe his face, before people.[1] I know not whether the gestures that were observed in me were of this first quality, and whether I had really any secret propensity to this vice, as it might well be; and I cannot be responsible for the motions of the body; but as to the motions of the soul, I will here confess what I think of the matter.

This sort of glory consists of two parts; the one in setting too great a value upon ourselves, and the other in setting too little a value upon others. As to the one, me- Montaigne apt to undervalue his person and possessions. thinks these considerations ought, in the first place, to be of some force; I feel myself importuned by an error of the soul that displeases me, both as it is unjust and as it is troublesome; I attempt to correct it, but I cannot root it out; which is that I lessen the just value of things that I possess, and overvalue others, because they are foreign, absent, and none of mine; this humour spreads very

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxi. 14.

far. As the prerogative of authority makes husbands look upon their own wives with an unjustifiable disdain, and many fathers their children, so 'tis with me; betwixt two works of equal merit I should always throw a weight into the scale against my own; not so much that the jealousy of my preferment and bettering troubles my judgment, and hinders me from satisfying myself, as that dominion of itself begets a contempt of what is our own, and over which we have an absolute command. Foreign governments, manners, and languages, insinuate themselves into my esteem; and I am sensible that Latin allures me by favour of its dignity to value it above its due, as it does children and the common sort of people. The economy, house, horse, of my neighbour, though no better than my own, I prize above my own, because they are not mine; moreover, being very ignorant in my own affairs, I am astonished at the assurance every one has of himself; whereas there is hardly any thing that I am sure I know, or that I dare be responsible to myself that I can do. I have not my means of doing any thing stated and ready, and am only instructed therein after the effect; as doubtful of my own force as I am of another. Whence it comes to pass that if I happen to do any thing commendable, I attribute it more to my fortune than my industry; forasmuch as I plan every thing by chance and in fear. I have this also in general, that of all the opinions antiquity has held of men in the gross, I most willingly embrace, and most adhere to, those that most contemn and undervalue us. Methinks philosophy has never so fair a game to play as when it falls upon our vanity and presumption; when it most lays open our irresolution, weakness, and ignorance. I look upon the too good opinion that man has of himself to be the nursing mother of all the most false opinions, both public and private. Those people who ride astride upon the epicycle of Mercury, who see so far into the heavens, are worse to me than a man that comes to draw my teeth; for in the study I pursue, the subject of which is man, finding so great a variety of judgments,

so great a labyrinth of difficulties one within another, so great diversity and uncertainty, even in the school of wisdom itself; you may judge, seeing those people could not resolve upon the knowledge of themselves and their own condition, which is continually before their eyes and within them, seeing they do not know how that moves which they themselves move, nor how to give us a description of the springs they themselves govern and make use of, how can I believe them about the ebbing and flowing of the Nile? "The curiosity of knowing things has been given to man for a scourge," says the Holy Scripture.

But to return to what concerns myself, it were very difficult, methinks, that any other should have a meaner opinion of himself, nay, that any other should have a meaner opinion of me than I have of myself. I look upon myself as one of the common sort, saving in this, that I have no better opinion of myself; guilty of the meanest and most popular defects, but not disowned or excused, and do not value myself upon any other account than because I know my own value. If there be any glory in the case, 'tis superficially infused into me by the treachery of my complexion, and has no body that my judgment can discern; I am sprinkled but not dyed; for in truth, as to the effects of the mind, there is nothing ever went from me, be it what it will, with which I am satisfied; and the approbation of others makes me not think the better of myself. My judgment is tender and difficult, especially in things that concern myself; I disown myself continually, and feel myself float and waver by reason of my weakness; I have nothing of my own that satisfies my judgment. My sight is clear and regular enough, but in working it is apt to dazzle; as I most manifestly find in poetry; I love it infinitely, and am able to give a tolerable judgment of other men's works; but, in truth, when I apply myself to it, I play the child, and am not able to endure myself. A man may play the fool in every thing else, but not in poetry:—

Montaigne always displeased with his own writings, and especially his poetical essays.

Mediocribus esse poetis,
Non di, non homines, non concessere columnæ.[1]

"But neither men, nor gods, nor columns meant
Poets should ever be indifferent."

I would to God this sentence were writ over the doors of all our printers, to forbid the entrance of so many rhymers!

Verum
Nil securius est malo poeta.[2]

"But the truth is this,
Nought more secure than a bad poet is."

Why have not we such people? Dionysius, the father, valued himself upon nothing more than his poetry; at the Olympic Games, with chariots surpassing all others in magnificence, he sent also poets and musicians to present his verses, with tents and pavilions royally gilt and hung with tapestry. When his verses came to be recited, the excellency of the pronunciation at first attracted the attention of the people; but when they afterwards came to weigh the meanness of the composition, they first entered into disdain, and continuing to nettle their judgments, presently proceeded to fury, and ran to pull down and tear to pieces all his pavilions; and in that his chariots neither performed any thing to purpose in the course, and that the ship which brought back his people failed of making Sicily, and was by the tempest driven and wrecked upon the coast of Tarentum, these same people certainly believed it was through the anger of the gods, incensed, as they themselves were, against that paltry poem;[3] and even the mariners themselves, who escaped from the wreck, seconded this opinion of the people, to which also the oracle, that foretold his death, seemed to subscribe; which was, "That Dionysius should be near his end when he should have overcome those who were better than himself;" which he interpreted of the Carthaginians, who surpassed him in power; and having war with them, often declined the victory,

[1] Horace, *de Arte Poetica*, v. 372.
[2] Martial, xii. 63, 13.
[3] Diod. Siculus, xiv. 104.

not to incur the sense of this prediction; but he understood it ill; for the god pointed at the time to the advantage that by favour and injustice he obtained at Athens over the tragic poets, better than himself, having caused his own play, called the Leneians, to be acted in emulation, presently after which victory he died, and partly of the excessive joy he conceived at his success.[1]

What I find tolerable of mine, is not so really and in itself, but in comparison of other worse things, that I see are well enough received. I envy the happiness of those that can please and hug themselves in what they do; for 'tis a very easy way of being pleased, because a man extracts that pleasure from himself; especially if he be constant in his self-conceit. I know a poet, against whom both the intelligent in poetry and the ignorant, abroad and at home, both heaven and earth, cry out that he understands very little in it; and yet, for all that, he has never a whit the worse opinion of himself, but is always beginning some new piece, always contriving some new invention, and still persists, by so much the more obstinate as it is only himself that stands up in his defence.

What notion Montaigne had of his own works.

My works are so far from pleasing me, that as often as I retaste them they disgust me:—

> Cum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima cerno,
> Me quoque, qui feci, judice, digna lini.[2]
>
> "When I peruse, I blush at what I've writ,
> And think 'tis only for the fire fit."

I have always an idea in my soul, a certain confused image, which presents me, as in a dream, a better form than what I have made use of; but I cannot catch it, nor fit it to my purpose; and yet even that idea is but of the meaner sort. By which I conclude that the productions of those rich and great

[1] Id. xv. 74. But Montaigne has here committed a singular blunder, mistaking the Leneians, feasts celebrated in honour of Bacchus by dramatic exhibitions, for the name of the tragedy, which was really called "The Ransom of Hector." See Ilez. Chiliad. v. 178.

[2] Ovid, de Ponto. i. 5, 15.

souls of former times are very much beyond the utmost stretch of my imagination or wish; their writings do not only satisfy and fill me, but they astonish me and ravish me with admiration; I judge of their beauty, I see it, if not to the utmost, yet so far at least as to show me 'tis impossible for me to aspire thither. Whatever I undertake, I owe a sacrifice to the Graces, as Plutarch says of some one,[1] to commend myself to their favour:—

> Si quid enim placet,
> Si quid dulce hominum sensibus influit,
> Debentur lepidis omnia Gratios.
>
> "If any thing can please that e'er I write,
> If to men's minds it ministers delight,
> All's to the lovely Graces due."

They abandon me throughout; all I write is rude; polish and beauty are wanting; I cannot set things off to an advantage; my handling adds nothing to the matter; for which reason I must have it forcible, very full, and that has lustre of its own. If I pitch upon subjects that are popular and gay, 'tis to follow my own inclination, who do not affect a grave and ceremonious wisdom, as the world does; and to make myself more sprightly, not my style, which would rather have them grave and severe; at least if I may call an informal and irregular way of speaking, a vulgar jargon, and a method without method, definition, division, or conclusion, perplexed like that of Amafanius and Raberius,[2] a style. I can neither please nor delight, much less ravish any one; the best story in the world is spoiled by my handling. I cannot speak but in earnest, and am totally unprovided of that facility which I observe in many of my acquaintance, of entertaining the first comers, and keeping a whole company in breath, or occupying the ear of a prince with all sorts of discourse, without being weary; they never

Montaigne's style.

[1] Of Xenocrates, in the *Precepts of Marriage*.

[2] Amafanius et Rabirius, nulla arte adhibita, de rebus ante oculos positis vulgari sermone disputant; nihil definiunt, nihil partiuntur, nihil apta interrogatione concludunt.—Cic. *Acad.* i. 2.

wanting matter, by reason of the faculty and grace they have in taking hold of the first thing started, and accommodating it to the humour and capacity of those with whom they have to do. Princes do not much like solid discourses, nor I to tell stories. The first and easiest reasons, which are commonly the best taken, I know not how to employ; I am an ill orator for the common sort; I am apt of every thing to say the utmost extreme that I know. Cicero is of opinion that, in treatises of philosophy, the exordium is the hardest part; if it be so, I do wise in sticking to the conclusion.[1] And yet we are to know how to wind the string to all notes, and the sharpest is that which is most seldom touched. There is at least as much perfection in elevating an empty, as in supporting a weighty, thing; a man must sometimes superficially handle things, sometimes go deep into them. I know very well that most men keep themselves in the lower form, for not conceiving things otherwise than by this outer bark; but I likewise know that the greatest masters, and Xenophon and Plato, are often seen to stoop to this low and popular manner of speaking and treating of things, maintaining them with graces which are never wanting to them.

As to the rest, my language has nothing in it facile and polished; 'tis rough and scornful, free and irregular in its dispositions, and therefore pleases me, if not by my judgment, by my inclination; but I very well perceive that I sometimes give myself too much rein; and that, by force of endeavour to avoid art and affectation, I fall into the other inconvenience:—

Brevis esse laboro,
Obscurus fio.[2]

"Aiming at shortness, I become obscure."

Plato says[3] that the long or the short are not properties

[1] Montaigne (observes Mr. Coste) only quotes this sentiment to ridicule Cicero, whom he treats rather as a fine orator than an acute philosopher, in which he was not much in the wrong; for whoever nicely examines Cicero's philosophical works will easily see that they are only the sentiments of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno, &c. elegantly and politely translated into Latin.

[2] Horace, *de Arte Poet.* v. 25.

[3] *Republic.* x.

that either take away or give lustre to language. Should I attempt to follow the other more moderate and united style, I should never attain unto it; and though the short round periods of Sallust best suit with my humour, yet I find Cæsar much greater and much harder to imitate; and though my inclination would rather prompt me to imitate Seneca's way of writing, yet I nevertheless more esteem that of Plutarch. Both in doing and speaking I simply follow my own natural way; whence, perhaps, it falls out that I am better at speaking than writing. Motion and action animate words, especially in those who lay about them briskly, as I do, and grow hot; the comportment, the countenance, the voice, the robe, and the tribunal, will set off some things that of themselves would appear no better than prating. Messala complains, in Tacitus,[1] of the straightness and stiffness of some garments in his time, and of the fashion of the benches where the orators were to declaim, that weakened their eloquence.

His French spoiled by the dialect of his native country.

My French tongue is corrupted both in pronunciation and otherwise, by the barbarism of my country; I never saw a man who was a native of any of the provinces on this side of the kingdom who had not a twang of his place of birth most offensive to ears purely French. And yet it is not that I am so perfect in my Perigordian; for I can no more speak it than German, nor do I much care; 'tis a language (as are all the rest about me, on every side, Poitou, Xaintonge, Angouleme, Limosin, Auvergne,—) scurvy, drawling, dirty. There is indeed above us, towards the mountains, a sort of Gascon spoken that I am mightily taken with,—blunt, brief, significant, and, in truth, a more manly and military language than any other I know; as sinewy, powerful, and pertinent, as the French is graceful, neat, and luxuriant.

As to the Latin, which was given me for my mother-tongue, I have by discountenance lost the ready use of speak-

[1] *De Oratoribus*, which treatise it is to be observed, Montaigne ascribes definitively to Tacitus, and, indeed, it is difficult to withhold our concurrence.

ing it, and indeed of writing it too; wherein I formerly had a particular reputation; by which you may see how inconsiderable I am on that side.

Beauty is a thing of great recommendation in the correspondence amongst men; 'tis the principal means of acquiring the favour and good liking of one another, and no man is so barbarous and morose that does not perceive himself in some sort struck with its attraction. The body has a great share in our being, has an eminent place there, and therefore its structure and symmetry are of very just consideration. They who go about to disunite and separate our two principal parts from one another are to blame; we must, on the contrary, reunite and rejoin them; we must command the soul, not to withdraw to entertain itself apart, not to despise and abandon the body (neither can she do it but by some ridiculous counterfeit), but to unite herself close to it, to embrace, cherish, assist, govern, and advise it, and to bring it back and set it into the true way when it wanders; in sum, to espouse and be a husband to it; forasmuch as their effects do not appear to be diverse and contrary, but uniform and concurring. Christians have a particular instruction concerning this connection; for they know that the divine justice embraces this society and junction of body and soul, even to the making the body capable of eternal rewards or punishments; and that God has an eye to every man's ways, and will have him receive entire his chastisement or reward, according to his merits. The sect of the Peripatetics, of all others the most sociable, attributes to wisdom this sole care, equally to provide for the good of these two associate parts; and the other sects, in not sufficiently applying themselves to the consideration of this mixture, show themselves to be biassed, one for the body, and the other for the soul, with equal error; and to have lost their subject, which is man, and their guide, which they in general confess to be nature. The first distinction that ever was amongst men, and the first considera-

The advantage of the beauty of the body.

tion that gave some preëminence over others, 'tis likely, was the advantage of beauty:—

Agros divisere atque dederie
Pro facie cujusque, et viribus, ingenioque;
Nam facies multum valuit, viresque vigebant.[1]

"Then steady bounds
Mark'd out to every man his private grounds;
Each had his proper share, each one was fit,
According to his beauty, strength, or wit;
For beauty, then, and strength, had most command."

Montaigne's stature.

Now, I am something lower than the middle stature,[2] a defect that not only borders upon deformity, but carries withal a great deal of inconvenience along with it, especially to those who are in command; for the authority which a graceful presence and a majestic mien beget is wanting. C. Marius did not willingly enlist any soldiers that were not six feet high.[3] "The Courtier"[4] has, indeed, reason to desire, in the gentleman he is forming, a moderate stature rather than any other, and to reject all strangeness that should make him be pointed at. But in choosing, if he must in this mediocrity have him rather below than above the common standard, I would not do so for a soldier. Little men, says Aristotle,[5] are pretty, but not handsome; and greatness of soul is discerned in a great body, as beauty is in a conspicuous stature;[6] the Ethiopians and Indians, says he,[7] in choosing their kings and magistrates, had a special regard to the beauty and stature of their persons. They had reason; for it creates respect in those that follow them, and is a terror to the enemy to see a leader, of a brave and goodly stature, march at the head of a troop.

Ipse inter primos præstanti corpore Turnus
Vertitur, arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est.[8]

[1] Lucret. v. 1109.

[2] Montaigne elsewhere talks of himself as being a little man. In his journey through Italy he remarks, with a sort of gratification, that the Grand Duke Francis Maria de' Medici was *his height*.

[3] Vegetius, i. 5.

[4] *Il Cortegiano*, by Balthazar Castiglione.

[5] *Ethics*, iv. 7.

[6] This is false (observes Mr. Cotton); the greatest souls have been in men of low stature; witness Alexander, &c. The contrast in Scripture between David and Goliath is beautiful.

[7] *Politics*, iv. 4.

[8] *Æneid*, vii. 783.

"The graceful Turnus, tallest by the head,
Shaking his arms, himself the warriors led."

Our holy and heavenly King, of whom every circumstance is with the utmost care, religion, and reverence, to be observed, has not himself refused bodily recommendation: *Speciosus forma præ filiis hominum.*[1] "He is fairer than the children of men." And Plato,[2] with temperance and fortitude, requires beauty in the conservators of his Republic. It would vex you that a man should apply himself to you, amongst your servants, to ask you, "Where is Monsieur?" and that you should only have the remainder of the compliment of the hat that is made to your barber or your secretary; as it happened to poor Philopœmen,[3] who arriving the first of all his company at an inn where he was expected, the hostess, who knew him not, and saw him an unsightly fellow, employed him to go help her maids a little to draw water, or make a fire, against Philopœmen's coming; the gentlemen of his train arriving presently after, and surprised to see him busy in this fine employment (for he failed not to obey his landlady's command), asked him what he was doing there? "I am paying," said he, "the penalty of my ugliness." The other beauties belong to women; the beauty of stature is the only beauty of men. Where there is a contemptible stature, neither the largeness and roundness of the forehead, nor the delicacy and sweetness of the eyes, nor the moderate proportion of the nose, nor the littleness of the ears and mouth, nor the evenness and whiteness of the teeth, nor the thickness of a well-set brown beard, shining like the husk of a chestnut, nor curled hair, nor the just proportion of the head, nor a fresh complexion, nor a pleasant air of the face, nor a body without any offensive scent, nor the just proportion of limbs, can make a handsome man.

I am, as to the rest, strong and well knit; my face is not puffed, but full; my complexion betwixt jovial and melancholic, moderately sanguine and hot, His face, &c.

[1] *Psa.* xlv. 3. [2] *Republic*, vii. [3] Plutarch, in Vith, c. 1.

Unde rigent setis mihi crura, et pectora villis;[1]

"Whence 'tis my thighs so rough and bristled are,
And that my breast is so thick set with hair;"

my health vigorous and sprightly, even to a well advanced age, and rarely troubled with sickness. Such I was; for I do not make any reckoning of myself now that I am engaged in the avenues of old age, being already past forty:—

Minutatim vires et robur adultum
Frangit, et in partem pejorem liquitur ætas:[2]

"Thence by degrees our strength melts all away,
And treacherous age creeps on, and things decay:"

what I shall be from this time forward will be but half being, and no more me; I every day escape and steal away from myself:—

Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes.[3]

"I find I am grown old, and every year
Steals something from me."

Montaigne not very lithsome.

Agility and address I never had, and yet am the son of a very active and sprightly father, and that continued to be so to an extreme old age. I have seldom known any man of his condition his equal in all bodily exercises; as I have seldom met with any who have not excelled me, except in running, at which I was pretty good. In music, in singing, for which I have a very unfit voice, or in playing on any sort of instrument, they could never teach me any thing. In dancing, tennis, or wrestling, I could never arrive to more than an ordinary pitch; in swimming, fencing, vaulting, and leaping, to none at all. My hands are so clumsy that I cannot so much as write, so as to read it myself, so that I had rather do what I have scribbled over again than to take upon me the trouble to make it out; and do not read much better than I write, at least to please my hearers. I cannot handsomely fold up a letter, nor could ever make a pen, or carve at table, worth a pin, nor saddle a horse, nor

[1] Martial, ii. 36, 5.
[2] Lucret. ii. 1131.
[3] Horace, *Epist.* ii. 2, 55.

carry a hawk and fly her, nor hunt the dogs, nor lure a hawk, nor speak to a horse. In fine, my bodily qualities are very well suited to those of my soul; there is nothing sprightly, only a full and firm vigour; I am patient enough of labour and pain, but it is only when I go voluntarily to the work, and only so long as my own desire prompts me to it,—

Molliter austerum studio fallente laborem;[1]

"Whilst the delight makes you ne'er mind the pain;"

otherwise if I am not allured with some pleasure, or have other guide than my own pure and free inclination, I am there good for nothing; for I am of a humour that, life and health excepted, there is nothing for which I would bite my nails, or that I would purchase at the price of annoyance of mind and constraint:—

Tanti mihi non sit opaci
Omnes arena Tagi, quodque in mare volvitur aurum.[2]

"Rich Tagus' sands so dear I would not buy,
Nor all the riches in the sea that lie."

Extremely idle, extremely given up to my own inclination, both by nature and art, I would as willingly lend a man my blood as my pains. I have a soul free and entirely its own, and accustomed to guide itself after its own fashion; having hitherto never had either master or governor imposed upon me, I have walked as far as I would, and the pace that best pleased myself; this is it that has rendered me of no use to any one but myself.

And there was no need of forcing my heavy and lazy disposition; for being born to such a fortune as I had reason to be contented with (a reason, nevertheless, that a thousand others of my acquaintance would have rather made use of for a plank upon which to pass over to seek a higher fortune, to tumult and disquiet), I sought for no more, and also got no more:—

[1] Horace, *Sat.* ii. 2, 12. [2] Juvenal, iii. 54.

Non agimur tumidis velis Aquilone secundo,
Non tamen adversis ætatem ducimus Austris;
Viribus, ingenio, specie, virtute, loco, re,
Extremi primorum, extremis usque priores:[1]

"I am not wafted by the swelling gales
Of winds propitious, with expanded sails;
Nor yet exposed to tempest-bearing strife,
Adrift to struggle through the ways of life;
For health, wit, virtue, honour, wealth, I'm cast
Behind the foremost, but before the last:"

I had only need of what was sufficient to content me; which nevertheless, is a government of soul, to take it right, equally difficult in all sorts of conditions, and that by custom we see more easily found in want than in abundance; forasmuch, perhaps, as according to the course of our other passions, the desire of riches is more sharpened by their use than by the entire absence of them, and the virtue of moderation more rare than that of patience. I never had any thing to desire, but happily to enjoy the estate that God by his bounty had put into my hands. I have never had any thing irksome to do; and have seen to little beyond the management of my own affairs; or, if I have, it has been upon condition to do it at my own leisure, and after my own method, committed to my trust by such as had a confidence in me, that did not importune me, and that knew my humour; for good horsemen will make a shift to get service out of a rusty and broken-winded jade.

He was naturally delicate and indolent.

Even my infancy was trained up after a gentle and free manner, and exempt from any rigorous subjection. All which has helped me to a complexion delicate and incapable of solicitude; even to that degree that I love to have my losses, and the disorders wherein I am concerned, concealed from me; so that, in the account of my expenses, I put down what my negligence costs me in keeping and maintaining itself;—

Hæc nempe supersunt,
Quæ dominum fallunt, quæ prosunt furibus.[2]

[1] Horace, *Epist.* ii. 2, 201. [2] Id. *ib.* i. 6, 4.

"Things superfluous, and to spare;
Goods which the owner knows not of, but may
Be unconcern'd when they are stolen away."

I do not love to know what I have, that I may be the less sensible of my loss; I entreat those that serve me, where affection and integrity are wanting, if they deceive me, to make it up with an air that may look handsome. For want of firmness enough to support the shock of the adverse accidents to which we are subject, and of patience seriously to apply myself to the management of my affairs, I nourish as much as I can this feeling in myself, wholly leaving all to fortune; to take all things at the worst, and to resolve to bear that worst with temper and patience; that is the only thing I aim at, and to which I apply my whole meditation. In a danger, I do not so much consider how I shall escape it, as of how little importance it is whether I escape it or no; should I be left dead upon the place, what matter? Not being to govern events, I govern myself, and apply myself to them, if they will not apply themselves to me. I have no great art to evade, to escape from, or to force fortune, and by prudence to guide and incline things to my own bias; I have still less patience to undergo the troublesome and painful care therein required; and the most uneasy condition for me is to be suspended in urgent occasions, and to be agitated betwixt hope and fear.

He was an enemy to deliberation.

Deliberation, even in things of lightest moment, is very troublesome to me; and I find my mind more put to it to undergo the various tumblings and tossings of doubt and consultation than to set up its rest, and to acquiesce in whatever shall happen, after the die is thrown. Few passions break my sleep; but of deliberations the least will do it. As in roads, I willingly avoid those that are sloping and slippery, and put myself into the beaten track, how dirty or deep soever, where I can fall no lower, and there seek my safety; so I love misfortunes that are purely so, that do not torment and tease me with the un-

certainty of their growing better, but that, at the first push, plunge me directly into the worst that can be expected:—

Dubia plus torquent mala.[1]

"Doubtful ills do plague us most."

In events, I carry myself like a man; in their conduct, like a child; the fear of the fall more fevers me than the fall itself. It will not quit cost; the covetous man has a worse account of his passion than the poor, and the jealous man than the cuckold; and a man ofttimes loses more by defending his vineyard than if he gave it up. The lowest step is the safest; 'tis the seat of constancy; there you have need of no one but yourself, 'tis there founded, and wholly stands upon its own basis. Has not this example of a gentleman very well known, some air of philosophy in it? He married, being well advanced in years, having spent his youth in good-fellowship, a great talker, and a great jeerer. Calling to mind how much the subject of cuckoldry had given him occasion to talk and scoff at others, to prevent them from paying him in his own coin, he married a wife from a place where any one may have flesh for his money; "Good-morrow, whore;" "Good-morrow, cuckold;" and there was not any thing wherewith he more commonly and openly entertained those that came to see him than with this plan of his, by which he stopped the private muttering of mockers, and took off the edge of this reproach.

Disgusted at ambition, because of its uncertainty.

As to ambition, which is neighbour, or rather daughter to presumption, fortune, to advance me, must have come and taken me by the hand; for to trouble myself for an uncertain hope, and to have submitted myself to all the difficulties that accompany those who endeavour to bring themselves into credit, in the beginning of their progress. I could never have done it:—

Spem pretio non emo;[2]

"I give not ready cash for hope."

[1] Seneca, *Agamemnon*, iii. 1, 29. [2] Terence, *Adelph.* ii. 3, 11.

I apply myself to what I see, and to what I have in my hand; and go not very far from the shore:—

Alter remus aquas, alter tibi radat arenas;[1]
"Into the waves I plunge one oar,
And with the other rake the shore;"

and besides, a man very seldom arrives to these advancements, but in first hazarding what he has of his own; and I am of opinion that, if a man has sufficient to maintain him in the condition wherein he was born and brought up, 'tis a great folly to hazard that upon the uncertainty of augmenting it. He to whom fortune has denied wherein to set his foot, and to settle to a quiet and composed way of living, is to be excused if he does venture what he has, because, happen what will, necessity puts him upon shifting for himself.

Capienda rebus in malis præceps via est;[2]
"A desperate case must have a desperate course;"

and I rather excuse a younger brother to expose what his friends have left him, to the courtesy of fortune, than him with whom the honour of his family is intrusted, that cannot be necessitous but by his own fault. I have found a much shorter and more easy way, by the advice of the good friends I had in my younger days, to free myself from any such ambition, and to sit still:—

Cui sit conditio dulcis, sine pulvere palmæ;[3]
"Far happier he in his sweet country-seat,
To gain the palm without or dust or sweat;"

judging right enough, of my own force, that it was not capable of any great matters; and calling to mind the saying of the late Chancellor Olivier, "That the French were like monkeys, that clamber up a tree from branch to branch, and never stop till they come to the highest; and there show their bald breech."[4]

[1] Propert. iii. 3, 23.
[2] Seneca, *Agamemnon*, ii. 1, 47.
[3] Horace, *Epist.* i. 1, 51.
[4] This comparison is suppressed in the edition of 1595, as injurious to the French nation. The saying has also been attributed to the Chancellor Michael de l'Hospital.

Turpe est, quod nequeas capiti committere pondus,
Et pressum inflexo mox dare terga genu;[1]

"It is a shame to load the shoulders so
That they the burden cannot undergo;
And the knees bending with the weight, to quit
The pond'rous load, and turn the back to it;"

The age in which Montaigne was born not at all agreeable to his humour

I should find the best qualities I have useless in this age; the facility of my manners would have been called weakness and negligence; my faith and conscience, if such I have, scrupulousness and superstition; my liberty and freedom, troublesome, inconsiderate, and rash. Ill luck is good for something; it is good to be born in a very depraved age; for so, in comparison of others, you shall be reputed virtuous without costing you much; he that in our days is but a parricide and sacrilegious, is an honest man and a man of honour:—

Nunc, si depositum non inficiatur amicus,
Si reddat veterem cum tota ærugine follem,
Prodigiosa fides, et Tuscis digna libellis,
Quæque coronata lustrari debeat agna;[2]

"Now, if a friend, miraculously just,
Restore th' intrusted coin with all its rust,
'Tis deem'd a prodigy, that should in gold
Amongst the Tuscan annals be enroll'd;
And that a crowned lamb should offered be
A sacrifice to such rare honesty;"

and never was time or place, wherein, for princes, were ready more certain rewards for virtue and justice. The first that shall make it his business to get himself into favour and esteem by those ways, I am much deceived if he do not, and by the best title, outstrip his concurrents; force and violence can do some things, but not always all. We see merchants, country justices, and artisans, go cheek by jowl with the best gentry in valour and military knowledge; they perform honourable actions both in public engagements and private quarrels; they fight, they defend towns in our present

[1] Propert. iii. 9, 5.

[2] Juvenal, xiii. 60.

wars. A prince stifles his renown in the crowd; let him shine bright in humanity, truth, integrity, temperance, and especially in justice; marks rare, unknown, and exiled; 'tis by no other means but by the sole good-will of the people that he can do his business, and no other qualities can attract their good-will like those, as being of greatest utility to them: *Nil est tam populare quam bonitas.*[1] "Nothing is so popular as goodness."

By this comparison I had been great and rare; as I find myself now a pigmy and ordinary, in comparison of some past ages, wherein, if other better qualities did not concur, it was ordinary and common to see a man moderate in his revenges, gentle in resenting injuries, religious in observing his word, neither double nor supple, nor accommodating his faith to the will of others, or the turns of times; I would rather see all affairs go to wrack and ruin than falsify my faith to secure them. For as to this virtue of dissimulation, which is now in so great request, I mortally hate it; and of all vices find none that shows so much baseness and meanness of spirit. 'Tis a cowardly and servile humour to hide and disguise a man's self under a vizor, and not to dare to show himself what he is; by it our people are trained up to treachery; being brought to speak what is not true, they make no conscience of breaking their words. A generous heart ought not to belie its own thoughts, but will make itself seen within; all there is good, or at least manly. Aristotle[2] reputes it the office of magnanimity openly and professedly to love and hate; to judge and speak with all freedom; and not to value the approbation or dislike of others, in comparison of truth. Apollonius said[3] it was for slaves to lie, and for freemen to speak truth. 'Tis the chief and fundamental part of virtue; we must love it for itself. He that speaks truth because he is obliged so to do, and because it serves him, and that is not afraid to lie when it

Dissimulation an odious vice.

[1] Cicero, *pro Ligar.* c. 12.
[2] *Ethics*, iv. 8.
[3] Phil. p. 409, ed. of Olearius, 1709.

signifies nothing to anybody, is not sufficiently true. My soul naturally abominates lying, and hates the mere thought of it; I have an inward shame and sharp remorse if sometimes a lie escape me, as sometimes it does, being surprised by occasions that allow me no premeditation. A man must not always tell all, for that were folly; but what a man says should be what he thinks, otherwise 'tis knavery. I do not know what advantage men pretend to by eternally counterfeiting and dissembling, if not never to be believed when they speak the truth; this may once or twice pass upon men; but to profess their concealing their thoughts, and to brag, as some of our princes have done, that they would burn their shirts if they knew their true intentions, which was a saying of the ancient Metellus of Macedon;[1] and that who knows not how to dissemble, knows not how to rule;[2] is to give warning to all who have any thing to do with them that all they say is nothing but lying and deceit: *Quo vis versutior et callidior est, hoc invisior et suspectior, detracta opinione probitatis:*[3] "By how much any one is more subtle and cunning, by so much is he hated or suspected, the opinion of his integrity being lost and gone;" it would be a great simplicity in any one to lay any stress either on the countenance or word of a man that has put on a resolution to be always another thing without than what he is within, as Tiberius did. And I cannot conceive what interest one can have in the conversation with such men, seeing they produce nothing that is current and true; whoever is disloyal to truth, is the same to falsehood also.

Of what importance it is to princes to avoid knavery.

Those of our time who have considered, in the establishment of the duty of a prince, the good of his affairs only, and have preferred that to the care of his faith and conscience, might have something to say to a prince whose affairs fortune had put into such a posture that he might for ever establish them by only

[1] Aurel. Victor, *de Vir. Illust.* c. 66.
[2] A favourite maxim of Louis XI.
[3] Cicero. *de Offic.* ii. 9

once breaking his word; but it is not so; they often buy in the same market; they make more than one peace, more than one treaty in their lives. Gain tempts them to the first breach of faith,—and almost always it presents itself, as in all other ill acts; sacrileges, murders, rebellions, treasons, are always undertaken for some kind of advantage; but this first gain has infinite mischievous consequences, throwing this prince out of all correspondence and negotiation, by this example of infidelity. Solyman, of the Ottoman race, a race not very solicitous of keeping their words and treaties, when, in my infancy,[1] he made his army land at Otranto, being informed that Mercurino de Gratinare and the inhabitants of Castro were detained prisoners, after having surrendered the place, contrary to the articles of the capitulation, sent orders to have them set at liberty, saying "That having other great enterprises in hand in those parts, the disloyalty, though it carried a show of present utility, would for the future bring on him a disrepute and distrust of infinite prejudice."

Now, for my part, I had rather be troublesome and indiscreet than a flatterer and a dissembler. I confess that there may be some mixture of pride and obstinacy in keeping myself so upright and open as I do, without any consideration of others; and methinks I grow a little too free where I ought least to be so, and that I become hot by the opposition of respect; and it may be, also, that I suffer myself to follow the propensity of my own nature, for want of art. Using the same liberty of speech and countenance towards great persons, that I bring with me from my own house, I am sensible how much it declines towards incivility and indiscretion; but, besides that I am so bred, I have not a wit supple enough to evade a sudden question, and to escape by some turn, nor to feign a truth; nor memory enough to retain it so feigned, nor, truly, assurance enough to maintain it, and play the brave out of weakness; and therefore it is that I abandon myself to can-

Montaigne naturally open and free with great men.

[1] In 1537, when Montaigne was four years old.

dour, and always to speak as I think, both by complexion and design, leaving the event to fortune. Aristippus was wont to say[1] that the principal benefit he had extracted from philosophy was that he spoke freely and openly to all.

Memory very useful to the judgment.

Memory is a faculty of wonderful use, and without which the judgment can very hardly perform its office; for my part I have none at all. What any one will propose to me, he must do it by parcels, for to answer a speech consisting of several heads I am not able; I could not receive a commission by word of mouth, without a note-book. And when I have a speech of consequence to make, if it be long, I am reduced to the miserable necessity of getting by heart, word for word, what I am to say; I should otherwise have neither manner nor assurance, being in fear that my memory would play me a slippery trick. But this way is no less difficult to me than the other; I must have three hours to learn three verses; and besides, in a work of a man's own, the liberty and authority of altering the order, of changing a word, incessantly varying the matter, makes it harder to stick in the memory of the author. The more I mistrust it the worse it is; it serves me best by chance; I must negligently solicit it; for if I press it 'tis astounded, and, after it once begins to stagger, the more I sound it the more it is perplexed; it serves me at its own hour, not at mine.

Montaigne's aversion to any sort of constraint.

And the same defect I find in my memory, I find also in several other parts; I fly command, obligation, and constraint; that which I can otherwise do naturally and easily, if I impose it upon myself by an express and strict injunction, I cannot do it; even the members of my body, over which a man has a more particular jurisdiction, sometimes refuse to obey me, if I enjoin them a necessary service at a certain hour; this tyrannical and compulsive appointment baffles them; they shrink up either through fear or spite, and fall into a trance. Being

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, ii. 68.

once in a place where it is looked upon as the greatest discourtesy imaginable not to pledge those that drink to you, though I had there all liberty allowed me, I tried to play the good-fellow out of respect to the ladies that were of the party, according to the custom of the country; but there was sport enough; for this threatening and preparation that I had to force myself, contrary to my custom and inclination, did so stop my throat, that I could not swallow one drop; and I was deprived of drinking so much as to help my meat; I found myself gorged, and my thirst quenched, by the quantity of drink my imagination had swallowed. This effect is most manifest in such as have the most vehement and powerful imagination; but it is natural, notwithstanding, and there is no one that does not, in some measure, experience it. They offered an excellent archer, condemned to die, to save his life, if he would show some notable proof of his art; but he refused to try, fearing lest the too great contention of his will should make him shoot wide, and that, instead of saving his life, he should also lose the reputation he had got of being a good marksman. A man that thinks of something else will not fail to take over and over again the same number and measure of steps, even to an inch, in the place where he walks; but if he makes it his business to measure and count them, he will find that what he did by nature and accident, he cannot so exactly do by design.

My library, which is a good one for a country library, is situated in a corner of my house; if any thing comes in my head that I have a mind to look there for, or to write, lest I should forget it in but going across the court, I am fain to commit it to the memory of some other person. If I venture in speaking, to digress never so little from my subject, I am infallibly lost, which is the reason that I keep myself strictly and drily close in discourse. I am forced to call the men that serve me either by the names of their offices or their country; for names are very hard for me to remember; I can tell, indeed, that there are three

Montaigne's bad memory.

syllables, that it has a harsh sound, and that it begins or ends with such a letter, but that's all; and if I should live long, I do not know but I should forget my own name, as some others have done. Messala Corvinus was two years without any trace of memory;[1] which is also said of George Trapezuntius;[2] and for my own interest, I often meditate what a kind of life theirs was, and if, without this faculty, I should have enough others left to support me with any manner of ease; and, prying narrowly into it, I fear that this privation, if absolute, destroys all the other functions of the soul:—

Plenus rimarum sum, hac atque illac perfluo.[3]

"I'm full of chinks, and leak out every way."

It has befallen me more than once to forget the watchword I had three hours before given or received; and to forget where I had hid my purse, whatever Cicero is pleased to say of the matter:[4] I help myself to lose what I have a particular care to lock safe up. *Memoria certe non modo philosophiam, sed omnis vitæ usum, omnesque artes, una maxime continet.*[5] "The memory in itself contains not only all philosophy, but all the use and all the arts, of life." The memory is the receptacle and sheath of all science; and therefore mine being so treacherous, if I know little, I cannot much complain. I know in general the names of the arts, and of what they treat, but nothing more. I turn over books, I do not study them; what I retain I do not know to be another's; 'tis only there that my judgment has made its advantage in the discourses and imaginations with which it has been filled; the author, place, words, and other circumstances, I immediately forget; and am so excellent at forgetting that I no less

1 Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 24, who says absolutely that Messala forgot his own name.

2 George of Trebizond, a Greek who came to Rome in the papacy of Eugenius IV., and there published various works. He died about the year 1484, in extreme old age, having forgotten all he formerly knew.

3 Ter. *Eun.* I. ii. 25.

4 *De Senect.* c. vii. *Nec vero quemquam senum audivi oblitum quo loco thesaurum obruisset;* "I never heard of an old man's forgetting the place where he had hid his treasure."

5 Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 7.

forget my own writings and compositions than the rest; I am very often quoted to myself, and am not aware of it. Whoever should inquire of me where I had the verses and examples that I have here huddled together, would puzzle me to tell him; and yet I have not borrowed them but from famous and known places, not satisfying myself that they were rich, if I moreover had them not from rich and honourable hands, where there was a concurrence of authority as well as reason. It is no great wonder if my book runs the same fortune that other books do, and if my memory loses what I have writ, as well as what I have read, and what I give, as well as what I receive.

Besides the defect of memory, I have others which very much contribute to my ignorance; I have a slow and heavy wit, the least cloud stops its progress, so that, for example, I never proposed to it any never so easy a riddle that it could find out; there is not the least idle subtlety that will not gravel me; in games, where the mind is required, as chess, cards, draughts, and the like, I understand nothing beyond the commonest points. I have a slow and perplexed apprehension, but what it once apprehends it apprehends well, closely and profoundly, for the time it retains it. My sight is perfect, entire, and discovers at a very great distance, but is soon weary; which makes me that I cannot read long, but am forced to have one to read to me. The younger Pliny can inform such as have not experienced it themselves, what, and how important an impediment this is to those who addict themselves to study.[1]

His apprehension dull.

His sight.

There is no so wretched and so illiterate a soul wherein some particular faculty is not seen to shine; no soul so buried

[1] Pliny, *Epist.* v. 8; who, in giving an account how Pliny the Elder, his uncle, employed his time in study, remarks among other things: "One day a friend of his, who was present when Pliny's secretary was reading to him, stopped the latter for the purpose of making him repeat some words he had mispronounced. Pliny asked him whether he had not understood their meaning? — 'Certainly,' replied the friend. — 'Why, then, did you prevent his going on? Here are more than ten lines lost!' So great an economist was he of time."

in sloth and ignorance but it will make a sally at one end or another; and how it comes to pass that a mind, blind and asleep to every thing else, shall be found sprightly, clear, and excellent, in some one particular effect, we are to inquire of our masters. But the beautiful souls are they that are universal, open, and ready for all things; if not instructed, at least capable of being so; which I say to accuse my own; for whether it be through infirmity or negligence (and to neglect that which lies at our feet, which we have in our hands, and what nearest concerns the use of life, is far from my doctrine), there is not a soul in the world so awkward as mine and so ignorant of many ordinary things, and such as a man cannot without shame be ignorant of. I must give some examples.

His ignorance in the most common things.

I was born and bred up in the country, and amongst husbandmen; I have had business and housekeeping in my own hands ever since my predecessors, who were lords of the estate I now enjoy, left me to succeed them; and yet I cannot cast up accounts, nor reckon my counters; most of our current money I do not know; nor the difference between one grain and another, either growing or in the barn, if it be not too obvious; and scarcely can distinguish between the cabbage and lettuce in my garden; I do not so much as understand the names of the chief instruments of husbandry, nor the most ordinary elements of agriculture, which the very children know; much less the mechanic arts, traffic, merchandise, the variety and nature of fruits, wines, and meats; nor how to make a hawk fly, nor to physic a horse or a dog; and, since I must publish my whole shame, 'tis not above a month ago that I was trapped in my ignorance of the use of leaven to make bread, or to what end it was to keep wine in the vat. They conjectured of old, at Athens, an aptitude to the mathematics in him they saw ingeniously bavin up a burden of brushwood;[1] truly, they would draw a quite

[1] Montaigne was mistaken in fixing the fact at Athens; for, according to Diogenes Laertius, ix. 53, it was Protagoras, of Abdera, who being observed by Democritus to be very ingenious at making fagots, he thought him capable of at-

contrary conclusion from me; for, give me the whole provision and necessaries of a kitchen, I should starve. By these features of my confession, men may imagine others to my prejudice. But whatever I deliver myself to be, provided it be such as I really am, I have my end; neither will I make any excuse for committing to paper such mean and frivolous things as these; the meanness of the subject compels me to it. They may, if they please accuse my project, but not my progress; so it is that, without any body's needing to tell me, I sufficiently see of how little weight and value all this is, and the folly of my design; 'tis enough that my judgment does not contradict itself, of which these are the essays:—

Nasutus sis usque licet, sis denique nasus,
Quantum noluerit ferre rogatus Atlas,
Et possis ipsum tu deridere Latinum,
Non potes in nugas dicere plura meas,
Ipse ego quam dixi; quid dentem dente juvabit
Rodere? Carne opus est, si satur esse velis.
Ne perdas operam; qui se mirantur, in illos
Virus habe; nos hæc novimus esse nihil.[1]

"Nose out my blunders till thy nose appear
So great that Atlas it refuse to bear;
Though even 'gainst Latinus thou inveigh,
Against my trifles thou no more can'st say
Than I have said myself; then to what end
Should we to render tooth for tooth contend?
Thou must have flesh if thou'dst be full, my friend,
Lose not thy labour; but on those that do
Admire themselves, thy utmost venom throw,
That these things nothing are, full well we know."

I am not obliged to utter absurdities, provided I am not deceived in them, and know them to be such; and to trip knowingly is so ordinary with me that I seldom do it otherwise, and rarely trip by chance. 'Tis no great matter to add ridiculous actions to the temerity of my humour, since I cannot ordinarily help supplying it with those that are vicious.

taining to the sublimest sciences, and took care therein to instruct him. Hence it is very likely that this was not at Athens, but at Abdera, which was the country both of Protagoras and Democritus; and Aulus Gellius expressly says so, v. 8

[1] Martial, ii. 13.

I was present one day at Barleduc,[1] when King Francis the Second, for a memorial of René, king of Sicily, was presented with a picture he had drawn of himself. Why is it not in like manner lawful for every one to draw himself with a pen as he did with a crayon? I will not therefore omit this further blemish, though unfit to be published, which is irresolution; a defect very incommodious in the negotiations of the affairs of the world. In doubtful enterprises I know not which to choose:—

Ne si, ne no, nel cor mi suona intero;[2]

"I cannot, from my heart, say yes or no;"

I can maintain an opinion, but I cannot choose one. By reason that, in human things, to what side soever a man inclines, so many appearances present themselves that confirm us in it (and the philosopher Chrysippus said,[3] that he would of Zeno and Cleanthes, his masters, learn their doctrines only; for as to the proofs and reasons, he should find enough of his own), which way soever I turn, I still furnish myself with causes and likelihood enough to fix me there; which makes me detain within me doubt and the liberty of choosing till occasion presses; and then, to confess the truth, I, for the most part, throw the feather into the wind, as the saying is, and commit myself to the mercy of fortune; a very light inclination and circumstance carries me along with it:—

Dum in dubio est animus, paulo momento huc atque
Illuc impellitur.[4]

"While he is divided in his mind, a little matter will turn
him one way or t'other."

The uncertainty of my judgment is so equally balanced, in most occurrences, that I could willingly refer it to be decided by the chance of a die; and observe, with great consideration of our human infirmity, the examples that the divine history

[1] In the month of September, 1559.
[2] Petrarch, p. 208, edit. di Giolito, 1557.
[3] Laertius *in Vitâ*, vii. 179.
[4] Terence, *And.* i. 6, 32.

itself has left us of this custom of referring to fortune and chance the determination of elections in doubtful things: *Sors cecidit super Matthiam:*[1] "The lot fell upon Matthew." Human reason is a two-edged and a dangerous sword; observe, in the hand of Socrates, her most intimate and familiar friend, how many several points it has. Thus I am good for nothing but to follow and suffer myself to be easily carried away with the crowd; I have not confidence enough in my own strength to take upon me to command and lead; I am very glad to find the way beaten before me by others. If I must run the hazard of an uncertain choice, I am rather willing to do so under such a one as is more confident in his opinions than I am in mine, whose ground and foundation I find to be very slippery and unsure.

Montaigne not given to change.

And yet I do not easily change, by reason that I discern the same weakness in contrary opinions: *ipsa consuetudo assentiendi periculosa esse videtur, et lubrica;*[2] "the very custom of assenting seems to be dangerous and slippery;" especially in political affairs, there is a large field open for contestation:—

> Justa pari premitur veluti cum pondere libra
> Prona, nec hac plus parte sedet, nec surgit ab illa.[3]
>
> "Like a just balance press'd with equal weight,
> Nor dips nor rises, but the beam is straight."

Machiavel's writings, for example, were solid enough for the subject, yet were they easy enough controverted; and they who have taken up the cudgels against him have left as great a facility of controverting them. There was never wanting, in that kind of argument, replies upon replies, and as infinite a contexture of debates as our wrangling lawyers have extended in favor of suits:—

> Cædimur, et totidem plagis consumimus hostem;[4]
>
> "By turns the foe beats us and we the foe,
> Dealing to each, alternate, blow for blow;"

[1] Acts, i. 26.
[2] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 21.
[3] Tibullus, iv. 41.
[4] Horace, Epist. ii. 2, 97.

the reasons having little other foundation than experience, and the variety of human events presenting us with infinite examples of all sorts of forms. An understanding person of our times says that whoever would, in contradiction of our almanacs, write cold where they say hot, and wet where they say dry, and always put the contrary of what they foretell if he were to lay a wager, he would not care which side he took, excepting where no uncertainty could fall out, as to promise excessive heats at Christmas, or extremity of cold at Midsummer, which cannot possibly be; I have the same opinion of these political controversies; be on what side you will, you have as fair a game to play as your adversary, provided you do not proceed so far as to jostle principles that are too manifest to be disputed; and yet 'tis my notion, in public affairs there is no government so ill, provided it be ancient and has been constant, that is not better than change and alteration. Our manners are infinitely corrupted, and wonderfully incline to grow worse; of our laws and customs, there are many that are barbarous and monstrous; nevertheless, by reason of the difficulty of reformation and the danger of stirring things, if I could put something under to stay the wheel, and keep it where it is, I would do it with all my heart:—

> Numquam adeo fœdis, adeoque pudendis
> Utimur exemplis, ut non pejora supersint.[1]
>
> "Bad as the instances we give, 'tis plain,
> Others might be produc'd of fouler stain."

The worst thing that I find in our state is the instability of it; and that our laws, no more than our clothes, can settle in any certain form. It is very easy to accuse a government of imperfection, for all mortal things are full of it; it is very easy to beget in a people a contempt of its ancient observances; never any man undertook it but he succeeded; but to establish a better regimen in the stead of that a man has overthrown, many who have attempted this have foundered

[1] Juvenal, viii. 188.

in the attempt. I very little consult my prudence in my conduct; I am willing to let it be guided by the public rule. Happy people, who do what they are commanded better than they who command, without tormenting themselves with the causes, who suffer themselves gently to roll on, after the celestial revolution. Obedience is never pure nor calm in him who argues and disputes.

In what Montaigne esteems himself.

In fine, to return to myself, the only thing by which I esteem myself to be something is that wherein never any man thought himself to be defective; my recommendation is vulgar and common; for who ever thought he wanted sense? It would be a proposition that would imply a contradiction in itself; 'tis a disease that never is where it is discerned; 'tis tenacious and strong, but what the first ray of the patient's sight does nevertheless pierce through and disperse, as the beams of the sun do a thick mist; to accuse one's self would be to excuse one's self, in this case; and to condemn, to absolve. There never was porter or silly girl that did not think they had sense enough for their need. We easily enough admit an advantage over us of courage, bodily strength, experience, disposition, or beauty in others; but an advantage in judgment we yield to none; and the reasons that simply proceed from the natural arguing of others, we think, if we had but turned our thoughts that way, we should ourselves have found it, as well as they. Knowledge, style, and such parts as we see in other works, we are readily aware if they excel our own; but for the simple products of the understanding, every one thinks he could have found out the like, and is hardly sensible of the weight and difficulty, unless, and then with much ado, in an extreme and incomparable distance; and whoever should be able clearly to discern the height of another's judgment, would be also able to raise his own to the same pitch. So that it is a sort of exercise, from which a man is to expect very little praise; a kind of composition of small repute. And besides, for whom do you write? The learned, to

Whether a person is to value himself for his writings.

whom the authority appertains of judging books, know no other value but that of learning, and allow of no other process of wit but that of erudition and art; if you have mistaken one of the Scipios for another, what is all the rest you have to say worth? whoever is ignorant of Aristotle, according to their rule, is in some sort ignorant of himself; heavy and vulgar souls cannot discern the grace of a high and unfettered style. Now these two sorts of men make up the world. The third sort, into whose hands you fall, of souls that are regular and strong of themselves, is so rare that it justly has neither name nor place amongst us; and 'tis pretty well time lost to aspire unto it, or to endeavour to please it.

'Tis commonly said that the justest dividend nature has given us of her favours is that of sense; for there is no one that is not contented with his share: Is it not reason? For whoever should discern beyond that would see beyond his sight. I think my opinions are good and sound; but who does not think the same of his? One of the best proofs I have that mine are so is the small esteem I have of myself; for had they not been very well assured, they would easily have suffered themselves to have been deceived by the peculiar affection I have to myself, being one that places it almost wholly in myself, and do not let much run out. All that others distribute amongst an infinite number of friends and acquaintance, to their glory and grandeur, I dedicate to the repose of my own mind, and to myself; that which escapes thence is not properly by my direction:—

What grounds Montaigne had for thinking his opinions right.

Mihi nempe valere et vivere doctus.[1]

"To love myself I very well can tell,
So as to live content, and to be well."

Now I find my opinions very bold and constant, in condemning my own imperfection; and to say the truth, 'tis a subject

[1] Lucret. v. 959.

upon which I exercise my judgment, as much as upon any other. The world looks always opposite; I turn my sight inwards, and there fix and employ it. Every one looks before him, I look into myself; I have no other business but with myself; I am eternally meditating upon myself, control and taste myself. Other men's thoughts are ever wandering abroad, if they set themselves to thinking; they are still going forward;

Nemo in sese tentat descendere;[1]

"No man attempts to dive into himself;"

for my part, I circulate in myself; and this free humour, of not over-easily subjecting my belief, I owe principally to myself; for the strongest and most general imaginations I have are those that, as a man may say, were born with me; they are natural, and entirely my own. I produced them crude and simple, with a strong and bold production, but a little troubled and imperfect; I have since established and fortified them with the authority of others, and the sound examples of the ancients, whom I have found of the same judgment; they have given me faster hold, and a more manifest fruition and possession of that I had before. The reputation that every one pretends to, of vivacity and promptness of wit, I seek in regularity; the glory they pretend to from a brave and honourable action, or some particular excellency, I claim from order, conformity, and tranquillity of opinions and manners: *Omnino si quidquam est decorum, nihil est profecto magis, quam æquabilitas universæ vitæ, tum singularum actionum; quam conservare non possis, si, aliorum naturam imitans, omittas tuam.*[2] "If any thing be entirely decent, nothing certainly can be more so than a uniformity of the whole life, and in every particular action of it; which thou canst not positively observe and keep, if, imitating other men's natures, thou layest aside thy own."

Here, then, you see to what degree I find myself guilty of

[1] Persius, iv. 23. [2] Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 31.

this first part, that I said was in the vice of presumption. As to the second, which consists in not having a sufficient esteem for others, I know not whether or no I can so well excuse myself; but, whatever comes on't, I am resolved to speak the truth. And whether, perhaps, it be, that the continual frequentation I have with the humours of the ancients, and the idea of those great souls of past ages, puts me out of taste both with others and myself; or that, in truth, the age we live in does produce but very indifferent things; yet so it is, that I see nothing worthy of any great admiration. Neither, indeed, have I so great an intimacy with many men as is requisite to make a right judgment of them; and those with whom my condition makes me the most frequent are, for the most part, men that have little care of the culture of the soul, but that look upon honour as the sum of all blessings, and valour as the height of all perfection.

Montaigne not much prepossessed in favour of his own times.

What I see that is handsome in others I very readily commend and esteem; nay, I often say more in their commendation than I think they really deserve, and give myself so far leave to lie; for I cannot invent a false subject. My testimony is never wanting to my friends in what I conceive deserves praise; and where a foot is due I am willing to give them a foot and a half; but to attribute to them qualities that they have not, I cannot do it, nor openly defend their imperfections. Nay, to my enemies, I frankly and ingenuously give their due testimony of honour; my affection alters, my judgment not; and I never confound my quarrels with other circumstances that are foreign to them; and I am so jealous of the liberty of my judgment that I can very hardly part with it for any passion whatever. I do myself a greater injury in lying, than I do him of whom I tell a lie. This commendable and generous custom is observed of the Persian nation; that they spoke of their mortal enemies, and with whom they were at deadly war, as honourably and justly as their virtues deserved.

He loved to commend merit, whether in his friends or enemies.

Enemies honoured by the Persians for their virtue.

I know men enough that have several fine parts; one wit, another courage, another address, another conscience, another language; one one science, another another; but a man generally great, and that has all these brave parts together, or any one of them to such a degree of excellence that we should admire him, or compare him with those we honour of times past, my fortune never brought me acquainted with; and the greatest I ever knew, I mean for the natural parts of the soul, was Stephen de la Boëtie; his was a full soul indeed, and that had every way a beautiful aspect; a soul of the old stamp, and that had produced great effects, had fortune been so pleased, having added much to those great natural parts by learning and study.

Praise of Stephen de la Boëtie.

How it comes to pass I know not, and yet it is certainly so, there is as much vanity and weakness of judgment in those who profess the greatest abilities, who take upon them learned callings and bookish employments, as in any other sort of men whatever; either because more is required and expected from them, and that common defects are inexcusable in them, or rather because the opinion they have of their own learning makes them more bold to expose and lay themselves too open, by which they lose and betray themselves. As an artificer more betrays his want of skill in a rich matter he has in hand, if he disgrace the work by ill handling, and contrary to the rules required, than in a matter of less value; and as men are more displeased at a disproportion in a statue of gold than in one of plaster, so do these, when they exhibit things that in themselves, and in their place, would be good; for they make use of them without discretion, honouring their memories at the expense of their understanding, and making themselves ridiculous, to honour Cicero, Galen, Ulpian, and St. Jerome.

Men of letters are vain, and of weak understandings.

I willingly fall again into the discourse of the vanity of our education, the end of which is not to render us good and wise, but learned; and she has obtained it; she has not

taught us to follow and embrace virtue and prudence, but she has imprinted in us their derivation and etymology; we know how to decline virtue, if we know not how to love it; if we do not know what prudence is really, and in effect, and by experience, we have the etymology and meaning of the word by heart. We are not content to know the extraction, kindred, and alliances of our neighbours, we would moreover have them our friends, and will establish a correspondency and intelligence with them; but this education of ours has taught us the definitions, divisions, and partitions of virtue, as so many surnames and branches of a genealogy, without any further care of establishing any familiarity or intimacy between her and us; she has culled out for our initiary instruction, not such books as contain the soundest and truest opinions, but those that speak the best Greek and Latin; and by these fine words has instilled in our fancy the vainest humours of antiquity.

A good education alters the judgment and manners; as it happened to Polemon,[1] a young debauched Greek, who going by chance to hear one of Xenocrates's lectures, did not only observe the eloquence and learning of the professor, and not only brought away the knowledge of some fine matter, but a more manifest and a more solid profit, which was the sudden change and reformation of his former life. Who ever found such an effect of our discipline?

> Faciasne, quod olim
> Mutatus Polemon? ponas insignia morbi,
> Fasciolas, cubital, focalia; potus ut ille
> Dicitur ex collo furtim carpsisse coronas,
> Postquam est impransi correptus voce magistri?[2]
>
> "Canst thou, like Polemon reclaim'd, remove
> Thy foppish dress, those symptoms of thy love;
> As he when drunk, with garlands round his head,
> Chanc'd once to hear the sober Stoic read;
> Asham'd, he took his garlands off, began
> Another course, and grew a sober man?"

That seems to me to be the least contemptible condition of

[1] Laertius, *in Vita*, iv. 16.

[2] Horace, *Sat.* ii. 8, 253.

men which, by its plainness and simplicity is seated in the lowest rank, and invites us to a more regular conversation. I find the manners and language of country people commonly better suited to the rule and prescription of true philosophy than those of our philosophers themselves. *Plus sapit vulgus, quia tantum, quantum opus est, sapit.*[1] "The vulgar are so much the wiser, because they only know what is needful for them to know."

The manners of the meaner sort of people more regular than those of the philosophers.

The most remarkable men whom I have judged by outward appearances (for, to judge of them according to my own method, I must penetrate a great deal deeper), for war and military conduct, were the Duke of Guise, who died at Orleans, and the late Marshal Strozzi. For men of great ability, and no common virtue, Olivier and De l'Hospital, chancellors of France. Poetry too, in my opinion, has flourished in this age of ours; we have abundance of very good artificers in the trade;—Aurat,[2] Beza, Buchanan, L'Hospital, Montdoré,[3] and Turnebus; as to the French, I believe they have raised poetry to the highest pitch to which it can ever arrive; and in those parts of it wherein Ronsard and Du Bellay excel, I find them little inferior to the ancient perfection. Adrian Turnebus knew more, and knew what he did know better, than any man of his time, or long before him. The lives of the late Duke of Alva, and of our Constable De Montmorency, were both of them great and noble, and that had many rare turns of fortune; but the beauty and glory of the death of the last, in the sight of Paris and of his king, in their service, against his nearest relations, at the head of an

[1] Lactant. *Divin. Instit.* iii. 5.

[2] Or rather *Dorat*, of which *Aurat(us)* is merely the Latinized form. This learned poet, Joseph Scaliger informs us, wrote more than 50,000 verses—French, Greek, and Latin.

[3] Pierre Montdoré, the least known of those here named, was master of requests, and librarian to the king. He is made mention of by L'Hospital in his Latin poems (page 91 and 521, ed. of 1825), and by Saint-Marthe in his *Eloges*. The rigourists who reproach Montaigne for having cited the Calvinist Theodore de Beza might equally have been scandalized at his mentioning Montdoré; for this learned man, a master of Aristotle and a skilful mathematician, was persecuted in 1567, and driven from Orleans, his native place, for his attachment to the new opinions. He retired to Sancerre, in Berri, where he died in 1571.

army, victorious through his conduct, and by a bold stroke, in so extreme an old age, merits, methinks, to be recorded amongst the most remarkable events of our times; as also the constant virtue, sweetness of manners, and conscientious facility, of Monsieur de la Noue,[1] in so great an injustice of armed parties (the true school of treason, inhumanity, and robbery), wherein he always kept up the reputation of a great and experienced captain.

I have taken a delight to publish in several places the hopes I have of Mary de Gournay le Jars,[2] my adopted daughter, beloved by me with more than a paternal love, and treasured up in my solitude and retirement as one of the best parts of my own being; I have no regard to any thing in this world but her. If a man may presage from her youth, her soul will one day be capable of very great things; and, amongst others, of the perfection of that sacred friendship, to which we do not read that any of her sex could ever yet arrive; the sincerity and solidity of her manners are already sufficient for it; her affection towards me more than superabundant, and such as that there is nothing more to be wished, if not that the apprehension she has of my end, from the five and fifty years I had reached when she knew me, might not so much afflict her. The judgment she made of my first Essays, being a woman so young, and in this age, and alone in her own place; and the notable vehemence wherewith she loved and desired me, upon the sole esteem she had of me, before she ever saw my face, are things very worthy of consideration.

[1] A celebrated Calvinist hero, whose political and military discourses were printed in 1587.

[2] See the article *Gournay* in Bayle's *Dictionary*, where you will find that this young lady's opinion of the first *Essays* of Montaigne gave the occasion for this adoption, long before she ever saw Montaigne. A passage which Bayle quotes from M. Pasquier, in the note A, contains some remarkable particulars of this adoption: "Montaigne," says Pasquier, "having in 1588 made a long stay at Paris, Mademoiselle le Jars came thither on purpose to see him; and she and her mother carried him to their house at Gournay, where he spent two months in two or three visits, and met with as hearty a welcome as he could desire; and, finally, this virtuous lady, being informed of Montaigne's death, crossed almost through the whole kingdom of France with passports, as well from her own desire as by invitation from Montaigne's widow and daughter, to mix her tears with theirs, whose sorrows were boundless.

Other virtues have little or no credit in this age; but valour is become popular by our civil wars; and in this we have souls great even to perfection, and in so great number that the choice is impossible to be made.

This is all of the extraordinarily uncommon preëminence that has hitherto arrived at my knowledge.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF GIVING THE LIE.

Why Montaigne speaks so often of himself in this work.

WELL but, some one will say to me, this design of making a man's self the subject of his writings were excusable in rare and famous men, who by their reputation had given others a curiosity to be fully informed of them. It is true, I confess it, and know very well, that tradesmen will scarce lift their eyes from their work to look at an ordinary man, when they will forsake their business and their shops to stare at an eminent person when he comes to town. It misbecomes any other to give his own character, but such a one who has qualities worthy of imitation, and whose life and opinions may serve for examples. Cæsar and Xenophon had whereon to found their narrations, in the greatness of their own performances, a just and solid foundation; and it were also to be wished that we had the journal papers of Alexander the Great, the commentaries that Augustus, Cato, Sylla, Brutus, and others, left of their actions; men love and study the representations of such men, even in copper and marble.

This remonstrance is very true; but it very little concerns me:—

Non recito cuiquam, nisi amicis, idque rogatus;
Non ubivis coramve quibuslibet: in medio qui
Scripta foro recitent, sunt multi, quique lavantes.[1]

'I seldom do rehearse, and when I do
'Tis to my friends, and with reluctance too,
Not before ev'ry one, and ev'rywhere;
We have too many that rehearsers are,
In baths, the forum, and the public square."

I do not here form a statue to erect in the most eminent square of a city, in the church, or any public place;

Non equidem hoc studeo, bullatis ut mihi nugis
Pagina turgescat,
Secreti loquimur;[2]

"I study not to make my pages swell
With mighty trifles—private things I tell;"

'tis for the corner of some library, and to entertain a neighbour, a kinsman, or a friend, that has a mind to renew his acquaintance and familiarity with me in this image I have made of myself. Others have been encouraged to speak of themselves, because they found the subject worthy and rich; I, on the contrary, am the bolder, by reason the subject is so poor and sterile that I cannot be suspected of ostentation. I judge freely of the actions of others; I give little of my own to judge of, because they are nothing; I do not find so much good in myself as that I can't tell of it without blushing. What contentment would it be to me to hear any thus relate to me the manners, faces, countenances, the ordinary words and fortunes of my ancestors! How attentively should I listen to it! Truly it would be a bad nature to despise so much as the pictures of our friends and predecessors, the fashion of their clothes and arms. I preserve a bit of writing, a seal, a prayer-book, a particular sword, that has been used by them; and have not thrown the long staves my father generally carried in his hand out of my closet: *Paterna vestis, et annulus, tanto carior est posteris, quanto erga*

[1] Hor. *Sat.* i. 4, 73. Instead of *coactus*, as Horace has it in the first verse, Montaigne has substituted *rogatus*, which more exactly expresses his thought.
[2] Pers. v. 19.

parentes major affectus.[1] "A father's garment and ring are by so much dearer to his posterity, as they had the greater affection towards him." If my posterity, nevertheless, should be of another mind, I shall be revenged on them; for they cannot care less for me than I shall then do for them. All the traffic that I have in this with the public is, that I borrow those utensils of their writing which are more easy and most at hand; and in recompense shall, perhaps, keep a pound of butter in the market from melting in the sun:—

Ne toga cordyllis, ne penula desit olivis;[2]

Et laxas scombris sæpe dabo tunicas.[3]

"I'll furnish plaice and olives with a coat,
And cover mack'rel when the sun shines hot."

Montaigne talks so much of himself that he might the better know himself, and give his own true character.

And though nobody should read me, have I lost my time in entertaining myself so many idle hours in pleasing and useful thoughts? In moulding this figure upon myself, I have been so oft constrained to temper and comport myself in a right posture, that the copy is truly taken, and has in some sort formed itself; painting myself for others, I have put myself on a better colouring than I had before. I have no more made my book than my book has made me; 'tis a book consubstantial with the author, of a peculiar design, a member of my life, and whose business is not designed for others, as that of all other books is. In giving myself so continual and so exact an account of myself, have I lost any time? For they who sometimes survey themselves only cursorily, do not so strictly examine themselves, nor penetrate so deep, as he who makes it his business, his study, and his whole employment, who intends a lasting record, with all his fidelity and with all his force; the most delicious pleasures do so digest themselves within that they avoid leaving any trace of themselves, and avoid the sight not only

[1] S. Augustin, *de Civit. Dei*, i. 13.
[2] Martial, xiii. 1, 1.
[3] Catull. xciv. 8.

of the people, but of any particular man. How often has this meditation diverted me from troublesome thoughts? And all that are frivolous should be reputed so. Nature has presented us with a large faculty of entertaining ourselves alone, and often calls us to it, to teach us that we owe ourselves in part to society, but chiefly and mostly to ourselves. That I may habituate my fancy even to meditate in some method and to some end, and to keep it from losing itself and roving at random; 'tis but to give it a body, and to book all the thoughts that present themselves to it; I give ear to my whimsies, because I have to record them. It sometimes falls out that, being displeased at some action that civility and reason will not permit me openly to reprove, I here disgorge myself, not without design of public instruction; these poetical lashes,

> Zon sur l'œil, zon sur le groin,
> Zon sur le dos du Sagoin,[1]
>
> "A jerk over the eye, one the snout,
> Let Sagoin be jerk'd throughout,"

imprint themselves better upon paper than upon the most sensible flesh. What if I listen to books a little more attentively than ordinary, since I watch if I can purloin any thing that may adorn or support my own? I have not at all studied to make a book; but I have in some sort studied because I had made it; if it be studying to pinch now one author and then another, either by the head or foot, not with any design to steal opinions from them, but to assist, second, and fortify those I already have embraced.

Montaigne's horror of lying.

But who shall we believe in the report he makes of himself, in so corrupt an age? considering there are so few, if any at all, whom we can believe when speaking of others, where there is less interest to lie. The first feature in the corruption of manners is the banishment of truth; for, as Pindar says,[2] to be true is the begin-

[1] Marot, in his epistle entitled *Fripelippes, valet de Marot à Sagon.*

[2] See Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* vi. 10. Stobœus, *Serm.* xi.

ning of a great virtue, and the first article that Plato requires in the governor of his republic. The truth of these days is not that which really is, but what every man persuades others; as we give the name of money, not only to good pieces, but even to the false also, if they are current and will pass. Our nation has long been reproached with this vice; for Salvianus Massiliensis, who lived in the time of the emperor Valentinian, says,[1] "That lying and forswearing themselves is not a vice with the French, but a way of speaking." He that would enhance upon this testimony might say that it is now a virtue with them; men form and fashion themselves to it as to an exercise of honour; for dissimulation is one of the most notable qualities of this age.

I have often considered whence this custom, that we so religiously observe, should spring, of being more highly offended with the reproach of this vice so familiar to us, than any other; and that it should be the highest injury can in words be done us, to reproach us with a lie. Upon reflection, I find it is natural for us to defend that part that is most open, and to repudiate the vice that most stains us; it seems as if, by resenting and being moved at the accusation, we in some sort acquit ourselves of the fault; though we have it in effect, we condemn it in outward appearance. May it also not be, that this reproach seems to imply cowardice and meanness of spirit? Of which can there be a more manifest sign than to eat a man's own words? —What, to lie against a man's own knowledge? Lying is a base unworthy vice; a vice that one of the ancients[2] portrays in the most odious colours, when he says, "That it is to manifest a contempt of God, and withal a fear of men." It is not possible more excellently to represent the horror, baseness, and irregularity of it; for what can a man imagine more hateful and contemptible than to be a coward towards men and valiant against God? Our intelligence being by no other

Lying an argument of the contempt of God.

[1] *De Gubernat. Dei*, l. 14.

[2] Plutarch, *Life of Lysander*, c. 4.

way to be conveyed to one another but by speaking, who falsifies that betrays public society; 'tis the only way by which we communicate our thoughts and wills; 'tis the interpreter of the soul; and if it deceives us, we no longer know, nor have any other tie upon one another. If that deceive us, it breaks all our correspondence, and dissolves all the ties of government. Certain nations of the new-discovered Indies (no matter for naming them, being they are no more; for, by a wonderful and unheard-of example, the desolation of that conquest has extended to the utter abolition of names and the ancient knowledge of places), offered their gods human blood, but only such as was drawn from the tongue and ears, to expiate for the sin of lying, as well heard as pronounced. The good fellow of Greece[1] was wont to say that children were amused with toys and men with words.

As to the divers usage of our giving the lie, and the laws of honour in that case, and the alterations they have received, I shall refer saying what I know of them to another time; and shall learn, if I can, in the mean time, at what time the custom took beginning, of so exactly weighing and measuring words, and of making our honours so interested in them; for it is easy to judge that it was not anciently amongst the Greeks and Romans; and I have often thought it strange to see them rail at and give one another the lie without any further quarrel. Their laws of duty steered some other course than ours. Cæsar is sometimes called thief, and sometimes drunkard,[2] to his teeth. We see the liberty of invectives they uttered against one another, among the greatest war chiefs of both nations, where words are only revenged with words, and never lead to any thing else.

The Greeks and Romans not so delicate in the article of lying as we are.

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Lysander*, c. 4.

[2] Plutarch, *Life of Pompey*, c. 16 *Life of Cato of Utica*, c. 7.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

'Tis usual to see good intentions, if carried on without moderation, push men on to very vicious effects. In this dispute, which at this time agitates France in civil war, the best and soundest cause, no doubt, is that which maintains the ancient religion and government of the kingdom; nevertheless, amongst the good men of that party (for I do not speak of those that only make it a pretext, either to execute their own particular revenges, or to gratify their avarice, or to pursue the favour of princes; but of those who engage in the quarrel out of true zeal to religion, and a holy affection to maintain the peace and government of their country), of these, I say, we see many whom passion transports beyond the bounds of reason, and sometimes inspires with counsels that are unjust and violent, and moreover inconsiderate and rash.

Religious zeal often extravagant, and consequently unjust.

It is certain that in those first times, when our religion began to gain authority with the laws, zeal armed many against all sorts of Pagan books,[1] by which the learned suffer an exceeding great loss; a disorder that I conceive did more prejudice to letters than all the flames of the barbarians; of this Cornelius Tacitus is a very good testimony; for though the emperor Tacitus, his kinsman, had by express order furnished all the libraries in the world with his work, nevertheless one entire copy could not escape the curious search of those who desired to abolish it, for only five or six idle clauses that were contrary to our belief.

They also had the trick, easily to lend undue praises to all the emperors who did any thing for us, and universally to

[1] Vopiscus, *in Tacit. Imp.* c. 10.

condemn all the actions of those who were our adversaries, as is evidently manifest in the emperor Julian, surnamed the apostate.[1] This was, in truth, a very great and rare man; a man in whose soul philosophy was imprinted in the best characters, by which he professed to govern all his actions; and, in truth, there is no sort of virtue of which he has not left behind him very notable examples; in chastity (of which the whole course of his life has given manifest proof), we read the same of him that was said of Alexander and Scipio, that being in the flower of his age, for he was slain by the Parthians at one and thirty, of a great many very beautiful captives, he would not so much as look upon one. As to his justice, he took himself the pains to hear the parties, and although he would, out of curiosity, inquire what religion they were of, nevertheless the hatred he had to ours never gave any counterpoise to the balance. He himself made several good laws, and cut off a great part of the subsidies and taxes imposed and levied by his predecessors.[2]

The character of the emperor Julian.

We have two good historians who were eye-witnesses of his actions; one of whom, Marcellinus, in several places of his history, sharply reproves an edict of his, whereby he interdicted all Christian rhetoricians and grammarians to keep school or to teach; and says he could wish that act of his had been buried in silence. It is likely that had he done any more severe things against us, he, so affectionate as he was to our party, would not have omitted it. He was, indeed, sharp against us, but yet no cruel enemy; for our own people tell this story of him, that one day, walking about the city of Chalcedon, Maris, bishop of that place, was so bold as to tell him that he was impious, and an enemy to Christ; at which, say they, therein affecting a philosophical patience, he

[1] What follows about the Emperor Julian was blamed, during our author's stay at Rome, in 1581, by the "*Maître du Sacre Palais* (says Montaigne, in his Journey); but the censor left it to my conscience to modify what I should think in bad taste." Our essayist accordingly made no alteration; and this chapter has furnished Voltaire with most of the materials for his eulogium on Julian.

[2] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. 8.

was no farther moved than to reply: "Go, poor wretch, and lament the loss of thy eyes;" to which the Bishop replied again, "I thank Jesus Christ for taking away my sight, that I may not see thy impudent face." Assuredly, this action of his savours nothing of the cruelty he is said to have exercised towards us. He was, says Eutropius,[1] my other witness, "an enemy to Christianity, but without shedding blood."

And, to return to his justice, there is nothing in that whereof he can be accused, the severity excepted he practised in the beginning of his reign against those who had followed the party of Constantius, his predecessor.[2] As to his sobriety, he lived always a soldier's kind of life; and kept a table in the most profound peace, like one that prepared and inured himself to the austerities of war. His vigilance was such that he divided the night into three or four parts, of which the least was dedicated to sleep; the rest was spent either in visiting the condition of his army and guards in person, or in study; for, amongst his other rare qualities, he was very excellent in all sorts of learning. 'Tis said of Alexander the Great that when abed, for fear lest sleep should divert him from his thoughts and studies, he had always a basin set by his bedside, and held one of his hands out with a ball of copper in it, to the end that, beginning to fall asleep, and his fingers leaving their hold, the ball by falling into the basin might awake him; but the other had his mind so bent upon what he had a mind to do, and so little disturbed with fumes, by reason of his singular abstinence, that he had no need of any such invention. As to his military experience, he was excellent in all the qualities of a great captain; as it was likely he should, being almost all his life in a continual exercise of war; and most of that time with us, in France, against the Germans and Franks; we hardly read of any man that ever saw more dangers, or that gave more frequent proofs of his personal valour.

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, x. 8.
[2] Id. xxii. 2, 10; xxv. 5, 6; from whom, also, the following illustrations of Julian's character are taken.

His death has something in it parallel with that of Epaminondas, for he was wounded with an arrow, and tried to pull it out, and had done it, but that being edged it cut and disabled his hand. He incessantly called out that they should carry him again in this condition into the heat of the battle, to encourage his soldiers, who very bravely disputed the battle without him till night parted the armies. He stood obliged to his philosophy for the singular contempt he had for his life and all human things. He had a firm belief of the immortality of the soul.

In matter of religion he was wrong throughout; he was surnamed the Apostate, for having relinquished ours; though, methinks, 'tis more likely that he had never thoroughly embraced it, but had dissembled, out of obedience to the laws, till he came to the empire. He was in his own so superstitious that he was laughed at for it by those of the same opinion, of his own time, who jeeringly said that had he got the victory over the Parthians, he had destroyed the breed of oxen in the world, to supply his sacrifices.

He was, moreover, besotted with the art of divination, and gave authority to all sorts of prognostics. He said, amongst other things at his death, that he was obliged to the gods, and thanked them in that they had not cut him off by surprise, having long before advertised him of the place and hour of his death; nor by a mean and unmanly death, more becoming lazy and delicate people; nor by a death that was languishing, long, and painful; and that they had thought him worthy to die after that noble manner, in the progress of his victories, and in the height of his glory. He had had a vision like that of Marcus Brutus, that first threatened him in Gaul, and afterwards appeared to him in Persia, just before his death. These words, that some [1] make him say when he felt himself wounded, "Thou hast conquered, Nazarene;" or, as others, "Content thyself, Nazarene," would hardly have been omitted, had they been

His remarkable death.

[1] Theodoret. *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 20.

believed by my witnesses, who, being present in the army, have set down to the least motions and words of his end; and the same with certain other miracles that are recorded of him.

And, to return to my subject, he long nourished, says Marcellinus, paganism in his heart; but, all his army being Christians, he durst not own it. But in the end, seeing himself strong enough to dare to discover himself, he caused the temples of the gods to be thrown open, and did his utmost to set on foot and to encourage idolatry. Which the better to effect, having at Constantinople found the people disunited, and also the prelates of the church divided amongst themselves, having convened them all before him, he gravely and earnestly admonished them to calm those civil dissensions, and that every one should freely, and without fear, follow his own religion; which he did the more sedulously solicit in hope that this license would augment the schisms and faction of their division, and hinder the people from reuniting, and consequently fortifying themselves against him by their unanimous intelligence and concord; having experienced, by the cruelty of some Christians, "that there is no beast in the world so much to be feared by man, as man." These are very nearly his own words.

Wherein this is very worthy of consideration, that the Emperor Julian made use of the same recipe of liberty of conscience to inflame the civil dissensions, that our kings do to extinguish them. A man may say, on one side, that to give the people the reins to entertain every man his own opinion, is to scatter and sow division, and, as it were, to lend a hand to augment it, there being no sense nor correction of law to stop and hinder their career; but, on the other side, a man may also say that, to give the people the reins to entertain every man his own opinion, is to mollify and appease them by facility and toleration, and dull the point which is whetted and made sharper by rarity, novelty, and difficulty. And I

The liberty of conscience granted, in Montaigne's time, to the Protestants.

think it is better for the honour and the devotion of our kings, that not having been able to do what they would, they have made a show of being willing to do what they could.

CHAPTER XX.

THAT WE TASTE NOTHING PURE.

THE imbecility of our condition is such that things cannot, in their natural simplicity and purity, fall to our use; the elements that we enjoy are changed, even metals themselves; and gold must in some sort be debased with the alloy of some other matter to fit it for our service; neither has virtue, so simple as that which Aristo, Pyrrho, and also the Stoics have made, "the principal end of life," nor the Cyrenaick and Aristippean pleasure, been without mixture useful to it. Of the pleasure and goods that we enjoy, there is not one exempt from some mixture of ill and inconvenience:—

> Medio de fonte leporum
> Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.[1]
>
> "Something that's bitter will arise,
> Even amidst our jollities."

Our extremest pleasure has some air of groaning and complaining in it; would you not say that it is dying of pain? Nay, when we forge the image of it, in its excellence, we stuff it with sickly and painful epithets, langour, softness, feebleness, faintness, *morbidezza;* a great testimony of their consanguinity and consubstantiality. The most profound joy has more of gravity than gayety in it; the most extreme and most full contentment, more of the temperate than of the wanton: *Ipsa felicitas se nisi temperat, premit:*[2] "Even

[1] Lucret. iv. 1130.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 74.

felicity, unless it moderates itself, oppresses." Ease chews and grinds us, according to the old Greek verse, which says, "The gods sell us all the goods they give us;" [1] that is to say, that they give us nothing pure and perfect, and that we do but purchase them at the price of some evil.

Pain and pleasure joined at one end, as appears from melancholy.

Labour and pleasure, very unlike in nature, associate, nevertheless, by I know not what natural conjunction. Socrates says [2] that some god tried to mix in one mass and to confound pain and pleasure; but not being able to do it, he bethought him at least to couple them by the tail. Metrodorus said,[3] that in sorrow there is some mixture of pleasure. I know not whether or no he intended any thing else by that saying; but, for my part, I am of opinion that there is design, consent, and complacency in giving a man's self up to melancholy; I say, besides ambition, which may also have to do in the business, there is some shadow of delight and delicacy which smiles upon and flatters us, even in the very lap of melancholy. Are there not some complexions that feed upon it?

Est quædam flere voluptas; [4]

"A certain kind of pleasure 'tis to weep;"

and one Attalus in Seneca says,[5] that the memory of our lost friends is as grateful to us as bitterness in wine too old, is to the palate,—

Minister vetuli, puer, Falerni
Ingere mi calices amariores,[6]

"Come, boy, bring hither old Falernian wine,
And with the bitt'rest fill the bowl that's mine,"

and as apples that have a sweet tartness. Nature discovers this confusion to us; painters hold that the same motions and pleats of the face that serve for weeping serve for laughter too; and indeed, before the one or the other be finished, do

[1] τῶν πόνων
Πωλοῦσὶν ἡμῖν πὰντα τ'αγαθ' οἱ Θεοἱ,
Epicharmus *apud* Xenophon, *Mem. of Socrat.* ii. 1. 20.

[2] In Plato's dialogue, entitled *Phædon*
[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 99.
[4] Ovid, *Trist.* iv. 3. 27.
[5] Seneca, *Epist.* 63.
[6] Catull. xxvii. 1.

but observe the painter's manner of handling, and you will be in doubt to which of the two the design tends; and the extremity of laughter at last brings tears: *Nullum sine auctoramento malum est.*[1] "No evil is without its compensation."

Constant and universal pleasure not to be borne by man.

When I imagine man abounding with all the pleasures and conveniences that are to be desired (let us put the case that all his members were always seized with a pleasure like that of generation in its most excessive height), I feel him melting under the weight of his delight, and see him utterly unable to support so pure, so continual, and so universal a pleasure. Indeed he is running away whilst he is there, and naturally makes haste to escape, as from a place where he cannot stand firm, and where he is afraid of sinking.

When I the most strictly and religiously confess myself, I find that the best virtue I have has in it some tincture of vice; and I am afraid that Plato, in his purest virtue (I who am as sincere and perfect a lover of him and of virtue of that stamp as any other whatever), if he had listened and laid his ear close to himself, as no doubt he did, he would have heard some jarring sound of human mixture; but faint and remote, and only to be perceived by himself. Man is wholly and throughout but patched and motley. Even the laws of justice themselves cannot subsist without mixture of injustice; insomuch that Plato says,[2] they undertake to cut off the hydra's head who pretend to clear the law of all inconvenience. *Omne magnum exemplum habet aliquid ex iniquo, quod contra singulos utilitate publica rependitur*, says Tacitus:[3] "Every great example has in it some mixture of injustice, which recompenses the wrong done to particular men by the public utility."

The justest laws have some mixture of injustice.

It is likewise true that, for the usage of life and the service of public commerce, there may be some excess in the purity and perspicacity of our minds; that penetrating light

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 69.

[2] Republic. iv. 5. Montaigne has slightly altered the idea of Plato.

[3] *Annals*, xiv. 44.

has in it too much of subtilty and curiosity; we must a little stupefy and blunt and abate them, to render them more obedient to example and practice, and a little veil and obscure them, the better to proportion them to this dark and earthy life; and therefore common and less speculative souls are found to be more proper and more successful in the management of affairs; and the elevated and exquisite opinions of philosophy more unfit for business. This sharp vivacity of soul, and the supple and restless volubility attending it, disturb our negotiations. We are to manage human enterprises more superficially and roughly, and leave a great part to fortune; it is not necessary to examine affairs with so much subtilty and depth; a man loses himself in the consideration of so many contrary lustres, and so many various forms: *Volutantibus res inter se pugnantes, obtorpuerant . . . animi.*[1] "Whilst they considered of things so different in themselves, they were astonished, and knew not what to do."

Common understandings more proper for affairs than the more refined.

'Tis what the ancients say of Simonides; that by reason his imagination suggested to him, upon the question King Hiero had put to him[2] (to answer which he had many days to meditate in) several sharp and subtle considerations, whilst he doubted which was the most likely, he totally despaired of the truth.

Who dives into, and in his inquisition comprehends all circumstances and consequences, hinders his election; a middling engine is equally sufficient for executions of less or greater weight and moment. The best managers are those who can worst give account why they are so; and the greatest talkers for the most part do nothing to the purpose. I know one of this sort of men, and a most excellent director in all sorts of good management, who has miserably let an hundred thousand livres yearly revenue slip through his hands. I know another, who speaks and gives better advice than any of his council; and there is not in the world a fairer show of

[1] Livy, xxxii. 20.

[2] *What God was?* Cic. de Nat. Deor. i. 22.

a soul and of greater understanding than he has; nevertheless, when he comes to the test, his servants find him quite another thing; and this without putting mischances down to the account.

CHAPTER XXI.

AGAINST IDLENESS.

THE Emperor Vespasian, being sick with the disease whereof he died, did not for all that neglect to inquire after the state of the empire; and even in bed continually dispatched very many affairs of great consequence; for which, being reproved by his physician, as a thing prejudicial to his health, "An emperor," said he, "should die standing."[1] A fine saying, in my opinion, and worthy of a great prince. The Emperor Adrian since made use of words to the same purpose;[2] and kings should be often put in mind of it, to make them know that the great office conferred upon them, of the command of so many men, is not an employment of ease; and that there is nothing can so justly disgust a subject, and make him unwilling to expose himself to labour and danger for the service of his prince, as to see him in the mean time devoted to his ease and unmanly delights; or to be solicitous of his preservation, who so much neglects that of his people.

In what posture a prince ought to die.

Whoever will take upon him to maintain that 'tis better for a prince to carry on his wars by others than in his own person, fortune will furnish him with examples enough of those whose lieutenants have brought great enterprises to a happy issue, and of those also whose presence had done more hurt

He ought to command his armies in person.

[1] Suetonius, *in Vitâ*, c. 24. [2] Spartian, *Verus*. c. 6.

than good. But no virtuous and valiant prince can with patience endure such dishonourable advice. Under colour of saving his head, like the statue of a saint, for the happiness of his kingdom, they degrade him from, and declare him incapable of, his office, which is military throughout. I know one [1] who would much rather be beaten, than to sleep whilst another fights for him; and who never without jealousy heard of any brave thing done, even by his own officers in his absence. And Selim I. said, with very good reason, in my opinion, "That victories obtained without the master were never complete;" much more would he have said that that master ought to blush for shame to pretend to any share in the honour, having contributed nothing to the work but his voice and thought; nor even so much as those, considering that, in such works as that, the direction and command that deserve honour are only such as are given upon the place, and in the heat of the business. No pilot performs his office by standing still. The princes of the Ottoman family, the first in the world in military fortune, have warmly embraced this opinion; and Bajazet the Second, with his son, that swerved from it, spending their time in sciences and other in-door employments, gave great blows to their empire; and Amurath the Third, now reigning, following their example, begins to find the same. Was it not Edward the Third, king of England, who said this of our Charles the Fifth? "There never was king who so seldom put on his armour, and yet never king who cut me out so much work." He had reason to think it strange, as an effect of chance more than of reason. And let those seek out some other to join with them than me, who will reckon the kings of Castile and Portugal amongst warlike and magnanimous conquerors, because, at the distance of twelve hundred leagues from their lazy abode, by the conduct of their captains, they made themselves masters of both Indies; of which it remains to be seen if

The activity and sobriety requisite in princes.

[1] Probably Henry IV.

they have but the courage to go and in person to enjoy them.

The Emperor Julian said yet further,[1] "That a philosopher and a brave man ought not so much as to breathe;" that is to say, not to allow any more to bodily necessities than what we cannot refuse, keeping the soul and body still intent and busy about honourable, great, and virtuous things. He was ashamed if any one in public saw him spit or sweat (which is said also of the Lacedemonian young men, and by Xenophon[2] of the Persians), forasmuch as he conceived that exercise, continual labour, and sobriety, ought to have dried up all those superfluities. What Seneca says will not be inapt for this place, that the ancient Romans kept their[3] youth always standing. They taught them nothing, says he, that they were to learn sitting.

The desire of making a useful exit is laudable, though the thing be not in our power.

'Tis a generous desire to wish to die usefully and like a man, but the effect lies not so much in our resolution as in good fortune. A thousand have proposed to themselves in battle, either to overcome or die, who have failed both in the one and the other; wounds and imprisonment crossing their design, and compelling them to live against their will. There are diseases that overthrow even our desires and our knowledge. Fortune was not bound to second the vanity of the Roman legions, who bound themselves by oath either to overcome or die; *Victor, Marce Fabi, revertar ex acie: si fallo, Jovem patrem, Gradivumque Martem, aliosque iratos invoco Deos.*[4] "I will return, Marcus Fabius, a conqueror from the army. If I fail, I invoke the indignation of Father Jove, Mars, and the other offended gods, upon me." The Portuguese say that, in a certain place of their conquest of the Indies, they met with soldiers who had condemned themselves with horrible execrations to enter into no composition, but either to cause themselves to be slain, or to remain vic-

[1] Zonaras, *Life of Julian*, towards the end.
[2] *Cyropædia*, i. 2, 16.
[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 88.
[4] Livy, ii. 45.

torious; and had their heads and beards shaved in token of this vow. 'Tis to much purpose to hazard ourselves and to be obstinate; it seems as if blows avoided those that present themselves too briskly to danger, and do not willingly fall upon those who too willingly seek them, but defeat them of their design. Such there have been who, after having tried all ways, not having been able, with all their endeavour, to obtain the favour of dying by the hand of the enemy, have been constrained, to make good their resolution of bringing home the honour of victory, or of losing their lives, to kill themselves even in the heat of battle. Of which there are other examples; but this is one:—Philistus, general of the naval army of Dionysius the Younger against those of Syracuse gave them battle, which was sharply disputed, their forces being equal; in which engagement he had the better at first, through his own valour; but, the Syracusans drawing about his galley to environ him, after having done great things in his own person to disengage himself, hoping for no relief, with his own hand he took away that life he had so liberally and in vain exposed to the fury of the enemy.[1]

Muley Moluch, king of Fez, who had just won, against Sebastian, king of Portugal, that battle so famous for the death of three kings, and by the transmission of that great kingdom to the crown of Castile, was extremely sick when the Portuguese entered in an hostile manner into his dominions; and from that day forward grew worse and worse, still drawing nearer to and foreseeing his end. Yet never did man employ himself more vigorously and bravely than he did upon this occasion. He found himself too weak to undergo the pomp and ceremony of entering into his camp, which after their manner is very magnificent, and full of action; and therefore resigned that honour to his brother; but that was also all of the office of a general that he resigned; all the rest useful and necessary he most exactly and laboriously performed in his own person; his body lying

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Dion*, c. 8.

upon a couch, but his judgment and courage upright and firm to his last gasp, and in some sort beyond it. He might have worn out his enemy, indiscreetly advanced into his dominions, without striking a blow; and it was a very unhappy occurrence that, for want of a little life, or somebody to substitute in the conduct of this war, and in the affairs of a troubled state, he was compelled to seek a doubtful and bloody victory, having another, by a better and surer way, already in his hands; notwithstanding, he wonderfully managed the continuance of his sickness in consuming the enemy, and in drawing them a long way from the naval army and the maritime places they had on the coast of Africa, even till the last day of his life, which he designedly reserved for this great contest. He ordered his battle in a circular form, environing the Portuguese army on every side, which circle coming to close in the wings, and to draw up close together, did not only hinder them in the conflict (which was very sharp, through the valour of the young invading king), considering they were every way to make a front; but prevented their flight after the defeat, so that finding all passages possessed and shut up by the enemy, they were constrained to close up together again; *coacervanturque non solum cæde, sed etiam fuga*, and there they were slain in heaps upon one another, leaving to the conqueror a very bloody and entire victory. Dying, he caused himself to be carried and hurried from place to place where most need was; and passing through the files encouraged the captains and soldiers one after another; but, a corner of his battle being broken, he was not to be held from mounting on horseback sword in hand; he did his utmost to break from those about him, and to rush into the thickest of the battle, they all the while withholding him, some by the bridle, some by his robe, and others by his stirrups. This last effort totally overwhelmed the little life he had left; they again lay him upon his bed. Coming to himself again, and starting out of his swoon, all other faculties failing, to give his

people notice that they were to conceal his death (the most necessary command he had then to give, that his soldiers might not be discouraged with the news), he expired with his finger upon his mouth, the ordinary sign of keeping silence.[1] Whoever lived so long and so far in death? Whoever died more like a man?

The extreme degree of courageously treating death, and the most natural, is to look upon it not only without astonishment, but without care, continuing the wonted course of life even into it, as Cato did, who entertained himself in study, and went to sleep, having a violent and bloody one in his head and heart, and the weapon in his hand.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF RIDING POST.

I HAVE been none of the least able in this exercise, which is proper for men of my pitch, short and well knit; but I give it over; it shakes us too much to continue it long. I was just now reading[2] that King Cyrus, the better to have news brought him from all parts of the empire, which was of a vast extent, caused it to be tried how far a horse could go in a day without baiting; and at that distance appointed stages and men, whose business it was to have horses always in readiness to mount those who were dispatched to them. And some say that this swift way of posting is equal to that of the flight of cranes.

Post-horses first set up by Cyrus.

[1] De Thou, *book* lxv. observes that it was said Charles de Bourbon gave the same signal, when he was expiring at the foot of the walls of Rome, which his troops took by storm just after his death.

[2] In the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon, viii. 6, 9.

Cæsar says that Lucius Vibullius Rufus, being in great haste to carry intelligence to Pompey, rid day and night, still taking fresh horses for the greater diligence and speed ;[1] (and he himself, as Suetonius reports,[2] travelled a hundred miles a day in a hired coach ;) but he was a furious courier ; for where the rivers stopped his way he always passed them by swimming, without turning out of his road to look for either bridge or ford. Tiberius Nero, going to see his brother Drusus, who was sick in Germany, travelled two hundred miles in four and twenty hours, having three coaches.[3] In the wars the Romans had against King Antiochus, T. Sempronius Gracchus, says Livy, *Per dispositos equos propè incredibili celeritate ab Amphissa tertio die Pellam pervenit :*[4] "upon horses purposely laid on, he, by an almost incredible speed, rid in three days from Amphissa to Pella :" and it appears, from this place, that they were established posts, and not purposely laid on upon this occasion.

Cecina's invention to send back news to his family was much more quick ; for he took swallows along with him from home, and turned them out towards their nests when he would send back any news, setting a mark of some colour upon them, to signify his meaning, according to what he and his people had before agreed upon.[5]

Pigeons taught to carry letters.

At the theatre at Rome masters of families carried pigeons in their bosoms, to which they tied letters, when they had a mind to send any orders to their people at home ; and the pigeons were trained up to bring back answer. D. Brutus made use of the same bird when besieged in Mutina,[6] and others elsewhere have done the same.

In Peru they rid post upon men's shoulders, who took them upon their shoulders in a certain kind of litter made for that purpose, and ran with such agility that at their full

[1] *De Bello Civili*, iii. 11.
[2] *Life of Cæsar*, c. 57.
[3] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 20.
[4] Livy, xxxvii. 7.
[5] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* x. 24.
[6] Id. *ib.* 77.

speed the first couriers throw their load to the second, without making any stop, and so on.

I understand that the Wallachians, the Grand Seignior's couriers, perform wonderful dispatch, by reason they have liberty to dismount the first they meet on the road, giving him their own tired horse; and to preserve themselves from being weary they gird themselves tight about the middle with a broad girdle, as many others do; but I could never find any benefit by it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF ILL MEANS EMPLOYED TO A GOOD END.

Political states subject to the same accident as the human body.

THERE is a wonderful relation and correspondence in this universal government of the works of nature, which very well makes it appear that it is neither accidental nor carried on by divers masters. The diseases and conditions of our bodies are in like manner manifest in states and governments; kingdoms and republics are founded, flourish, and decay with age, as we do. We are subject to a repletion of humours, useless or dangerous; either of those that are good (for even those physicians are afraid of; and as we have nothing in us that is permanent, they say that a too brisk and vigorous perfection of health must be abated by art, lest, as our nature cannot rest in any certain condition, and not having whither to rise to mend itself, it makes too sudden and too disorderly a retreat; and therefore they prescribe wrestlers to purge and bleed, to reduce that superabundant health); or else of those that are evil, which is the ordinary cause of sickness. States are very often sick of the like repletion, and different sorts of purgations have been wont to be used. Sometimes a great num-

ber of families are turned out to clear the country, who seek out new abodes elsewhere, and encroach upon others; after this manner our ancient Franks came from the remotest part of Germany to seize upon Gaul, and to drive thence the first inhabitants; so was that infinite deluge of men made up that came into Italy under the conduct of Brennus and others; so the Goths and Vandals, as also the people who now possess Greece, left their native country to go settle in other places where they might have more room; and there is scarce two or three little corners of the world that have not felt the effects of such removals. The Romans by this means erected their colonies; for perceiving their city to grow immeasurably populous, they eased it of the most unnecessary people, and sent them to inhabit and cultivate the lands they had conquered; sometimes also they purposely maintained wars with some of their enemies, not only to keep their men in action, for fear lest idleness, the mother of corruption, should bring upon them some worse inconvenience,

> Et patimur longæ pacis mala; sævior armis
> Luxuria incumbit;[1]
>
> "We suffer ills from a long peace by far
> Greater and more pernicious e'en than war;"

but also to serve for a blood-letting to their republic, a little to evaporate the too vehement heat of their youth, and to prune and cleanse the branches from the stock too luxuriant in wood; and to this end it was that they formerly maintained so long a war with Carthage.

In the treaty of Bretigny, Edward the Third, King of England, would not, in the general peace he then made with our king, comprehend the controversy about the duchy of Brittany, that he might have a place wherein to discharge himself of his soldiers, and that the vast number of English he had brought over to serve him in that expedition might not return back and inundate England.[2] And this also was one reason why our King Philip consented to send his son

[1] Juvenal, vi. 291.

[2] Froissart, tome i.

John on that foreign expedition, that he might take along with him a great number of hot young men that were then in his pay.

There are many in our times who talk at this rate, wishing that this hot emotion, that is now amongst us, might discharge itself on some neighbouring war, for fear lest the peccant humours that now reign in this politic body of ours, unless diffused further, should keep the fever still in force, and at last cause our total ruin; and, in truth, a foreign is much more supportable than a civil war. But I do not believe that God would favour so unjust a design as to offend and quarrel with others for our convenience :—

The utility of a foreign war.

> Nil mihi tam valde placeat, Rhamnusia virgo,
> Quod temere invitis suspiciatur heris.[1]
>
> "In unjust war, against another's right,
> For sake of plunder, may I ne'er delight."

And yet the weakness of our condition often pushes us upon the necessity of making use of ill means to a good end. Lycurgus, the most virtuous and perfect legislator that ever was, invented this unjust practice of making the Helots, who were their slaves, drunk by force, by so doing to teach his people temperance; to the end that the Spartans, seeing them so overwhelmed and buried in wine, might abhor the excess of this vice.[2] And yet they were more to blame who of old gave leave that criminals, to what sort of death soever condemned, should be cut up alive by the physicians, that they might make a true discovery of our inward parts, and build their art upon greater certainty;[3] for if we must run into excesses, 'tis more excusable to do it for the health of the soul than for that of the body; as the Romans trained up the people to valour, and the contempt of dangers and death, by those furious spectacles of gladiators and fencers, who being to

Men taught to use bad means for obtaining a good end.

[1] Catullus, lxviii. 77.
[2] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 21.
[3] Cornel. Celsi, Medecina, Præf.

fight it out till the last, cut, mangled, and killed one another in their presence :—

> Quid vesani aliud sibi vult ars impia ludi,
> Quid mortes juvenum, quid sanguine pasta voluptas?
>
> "Of such inhuman sports what further use,
> What pleasure can the blood of men produce?"

And this custom continued till the Emperor Theodosius's time :—

> Arripe dilatam tua, dux, in tempora famam,
> Quodque patris superest, successor laudis habeto . . .
> Nullus in urbe cadat, cujus sit pœna voluptas . . .
> Jam solis contenta feris, infamis arena
> Nulla cruentatis homicidia ludat in armis.[1]
>
> "Prince, take the honours destin'd for thy reign—
> Inherit of thy father those remain—
> Henceforth let none at Rome for sport be slain.
> Let none but beasts blood-stain the theatre,
> And no more homicides be acted there."

It was in truth a wonderful example, and of great advantage for the training up the people, to see every day before their eyes a hundred, two hundred, nay, a thousand couples of men armed against one another, cut one another to pieces with so great constancy of courage that they were never heard to utter so much as one syllable of weakness or commiseration; never seen to turn back, nor so much as to make one cowardly step to evade a blow, but rather expose their necks to the adversary's sword, and present themselves to receive the stroke; and many of them, when wounded to death, have sent to ask the spectators if they were satisfied with their behaviour, before they lay down to die upon the place. It was not enough for them to fight and die bravely, but cheerfully too; insomuch that they were hissed and cursed if they made any dispute about receiving their death; the very girls themselves set them on :—

> consurgit ad ictus,
> Et, quoties victor ferrum jugulo inserit, illa

[1] Prudent. *Adv. Symmac.* ii. 648.

Delicias ait esse suas, pectusque jacentis
Virgo modesta jubet converso pollice rumpi.[1]

"The modest virgin is delighted so
With the fell sport that she applauds the blow;
And when the victor bathes his bloody brand
In 's fellow's throat, and lays him on the sand,
Then she's most pleas'd, and shows, by signs, she'd fain
Have him rip up the bosom of the slain."

The first Romans only condemned criminals to this example; but afterwards they employed innocent slaves in the work, and even freemen, too, who sold themselves for this purpose; nay, senators and knights of Rome; and also women:—

Nunc caput in mortem vendunt, et funus arenæ,
Atque hostem sibi quisque parat, cum bella quiescunt;[2]

"They sell themselves to death, and, since the wars
Are ceas'd, each for himself a foe prepares;"

Hos inter fremitus novosque lusus . . . .
Stat sexus rudis insciusque ferri,
Et pugnas capit improbus viriles:[3]

"Amidst these tumults and alarms
The tender sex, unskill'd in arms,
Immodestly will try their might,
And now engage in manly fight:"

which I should think very strange and incredible if we were not accustomed every day to see, in our own wars, many thousands of men of other nations, for money to stake their blood and their lives in quarrels wherein they have no manner of concern.

[1] Prudent. *Adv. Symmac.* ii. 617.
[2] Manilius, *Astron.* iv. 225.
[3] Statius, *Sylv.* i. 6, 51.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF THE ROMAN GRANDEUR.

I WILL only say a word or two on this infinite argument to show the simplicity of those who compare the pitiful grandeurs of these times to that of Rome. In the seventh book of Cicero's Familiar Epistles (and let the grammarians put out that surname of *familiar* if they please, for in truth it is not very proper; and they who, instead of *familiar*, have substituted *ad familiares*, may gather something to justify them for so doing out of what Suetonius says in the Life of Cæsar,[1] that there was a volume of letters of his *ad familiares*), there is one directed to Cæsar, being then in Gaul, wherein Cicero repeats these words, which were in the end of another letter that Cæsar had written to him: "As to what concerns Marcus Furius, whom you have recommended to me, I will make him king of Gaul; and if you would advance any other friend of yours, send him to me."[2] It was no new thing for a simple citizen of Rome, as Cæsar then was, to dispose of kingdoms; for he took away that of King Deiotarus from him, to give it to a gentleman of the city of Pergamus called Mithridates;[3] and those who wrote his life record several kingdoms by him sold; and Suetonius says[4] that he had at once from King Ptolemy three millions six hundred thousand crowns, which was very near selling him his kingdom.

Tot Galatæ, tot Pontus eat, tot Lydia nummis.[5]

"So much for Pontus, so much for Lydia, so much for Galatea."

[1] Sueton. *Life of Cæsar*, c. 56.

[2] Cicero, *Epist. Fam.* vii. 5. The most received text has the name *M. Orfium*. Some commentators have regarded Cæsar's offer as a mere jest; but Montaigne, who takes it as a serious offer, may very well be in the right, for Cæsar's proposal may merely have extended to making Cicero's friend one of the petty regulii whom the Romans appointed over districts in the various parts of their conquests.

[3] Cicero, *de Divinat.* ii. 37.

[4] *Life of Cæsar*, c. 54.

[5] Claud. *in Eutrop.* i. 203.

Mark Antony said[1] that the grandeur of the people of Rome was not so much seen in what they took as what they gave; and, indeed, some ages before Antony, they had dethroned one amongst the rest, with so wonderful authority, that in all the Roman History I have not observed any thing that more denotes the height of their power. Antiochus possessed all Egypt, and was about conquering Cyprus, and other appendages of that empire. Being upon the progress of his victories, C. Popilius came to him from the Senate, and at their first meeting refused to take him by the hand till he had first read the letters he brought him. The king having read them, told him he would consider of them; but Popilius made a circumference about him with the wand he had in his hand, saying, "Return me an answer, that I may carry back to the Senate, before thou stirrest out of this circle." Antiochus, astonished at the roughness of so positive a command, after a little pause replied, "I will obey the Senate's command;"[2] and then it was that Popilius saluted him as a friend to the people of Rome. After having renounced so great a monarchy, and such a torrent of successful fortune, upon three scratches of the pen; in earnest he had reason, as he afterwards did, to send the Senate word, by his ambassadors, that he had received their order with the same respect as if it had been sent by the immortal gods.[3]

A great king deprived of his conquests by a letter from the Roman senate.

All the kingdoms that Augustus gained by the right of war he either restored to those who had lost them, or presented them to strangers. And Tacitus, in reference to this, speaking of Cogidunus, king of England, gives us, by a touch, a marvellous idea of that infinite power: "The Romans," says he, "were from all antiquity accustomed to leave the kings they had subdued in possession of their kingdoms under their authority, that they might have even kings to be their slaves:" *Ut haberent instrumenta servitutis et reges.*[4] 'Tis likely that Soly-

Why the Romans restored their conquered kingdoms to their owners.

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 8. [2] Livy, xlv. 12. [3] Id. 13. [4] Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. 14

man, whom we have seen make a gift of Hungary and other principalities, had therein more respect to this consideration than to that he was wont to allege, viz: that he was glutted and overcharged with so many monarchies, and so much dominion, as his own valour and that of his ancestors had acquired.

CHAPTER XXV.

NOT TO COUNTERFEIT BEING SICK.

Gout counterfeit became a real gout.

THERE is an epigram in Martial of very good sense, for he has of all sorts, where he pleasantly tells the story of Cælius, who, to avoid making his court to some great men of Rome, to wait their rising, and to attend them abroad, pretended to have the gout; and, the better to colour this pretence, anointed his legs, and had them wrapped up in a great many clouts and swathings, and perfectly counterfeited both the gesture and countenance of a gouty person, till in the end fortune did him the kindness to make him gouty indeed.

> Tantum cura potest, et ars doloris!
> Desit fingere Cælius podagram.[1]
>
> "So much has counterfeiting brought about,
> Cælius has ceased to counterfeit the gout."

I think I have read somewhere in Appian[2] a story like this, of one who, to escape the proscriptions of the Triumviri of Rome, and the better to be concealed from the discovery of those who pursued him, having shaded himself in a disguise, would yet add this invention, to counterfeit having but one eye; but when he came to have a little more liberty, and went to take off the plaster he had a great while worn over

[1] Martial, vii. 39, 8. [2] *Civil Wars*, iv.

his eye, he found he had totally lost the sight of it indeed, and that it was absolutely gone. 'Tis possible that the action of sight was dulled for having been so long without exercise, and that the optic power was wholly retired into the other eye; for we evidently perceive that the eye we keep shut sends some part of its virtue to its fellow, so that the remaining eye will swell and grow bigger; as also idleness, with the heat of ligatures and plasters, might very well have brought some gouty humour upon this dissembler in Martial.

Reading in Froissard [1] the vow of a troop of young English gallants, to carry their left eyes bound up till they were arrived in France, and had performed some notable exploit upon us, I have oft been tickled with the conceit of its befalling them as it did the beforenamed Roman, and that they had returned with but an eye apiece to their mistresses, for whose sakes they had entered into this vow.

Mothers have reason to rebuke their children when they counterfeit having but one eye, squinting, lameness, or any other personal defect; for, besides that their bodies being then so tender may be subject to take an ill bent, fortune, I know not how, sometimes seems to take a delight to take us at our word; and I have heard several examples related of people who have become really sick by only feigning to be so. I have always used, whether on horseback or on foot, to carry a stick in my hand, and so as to affect doing it with a grace; many have threatened that this trick would one day be turned into necessity; that is, that I should be the first of my family that should have the gout.

It is proper to hinder children from counterfeiting personal defects.

But let us a little lengthen this chapter, and vary it with a piece of another colour, concerning blindness. Pliny [2] reports of one, that, once dreaming he was blind, found himself in the morning so indeed, without any preceding infirmity in his eyes. The force of imagination might assist in this case, as I have said elsewhere; and Pliny seems to be of the same

[1] Vol. i.

[2] *Nat. Hist.* vii. 50.

opinion; but it is more likely that the motions which the body felt within (of which physicians, if they please, may find out the cause), which took away his sight, were the occasion of his dream.

Let us add another story, akin to this subject, which Seneca[1] relates in one of his Epistles: "You know," says he, writing to Lucilius, "that Harpaste, my wife's fool, lives upon me as an hereditary charge; for, as to my own taste, I have an aversion to those monsters; and if I have a mind to laugh at a fool, I need not seek him far, I can laugh at myself. This fool has suddenly lost her sight. I tell you a strange, but a very true thing; she is not sensible that she is blind, but eternally importunes her keeper to take her abroad, because she says the house is dark. I pray you to believe that what we laugh at in her happens to every one of us; no one knows himself to be avaricious. Besides, the blind call for a guide; we stray of our own accord. I am not ambitious, we say; but a man cannot live otherwise at Rome; I am not wasteful, but the city requires a great expense; 'tis not my fault if I am choleric, and if I have not yet established any certain course of life; 'tis the fault of youth. Let us not seek our disease out of ourselves; 'tis in us, and planted in our bowels; and even this, that we do not perceive ourselves to be sick, renders us more hard to be cured. If we do not betimes begin to dress them, when shall we have done with so many wounds and evils wherewith we abound? And yet we have a most sweet and charming medicine in philosophy; for all the rest give no pleasure till after the cure; this pleases and heals at once." This is what Seneca says; he has carried me from my subject; but there is advantage in the change.

[1] *Ep.* 50.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OF THUMBS.

TACITUS reports[1] that amongst certain barbarian kings their manner was, when they would make a firm obligation, to join their right hands close to one another, and twist their thumbs; and when, by force of straining, the blood mounted to the ends, they lightly pricked them with some sharp instrument, and mutually sucked them.

Physicians say[2] that the thumbs are the masters of the hand, and that their Latin etymology is derived from *pollere*.[3] The Greeks called them ἀντιχέιρ, as who should say "another hand." And it seems that the Latins also sometimes take them in this sense for the whole hand:—

> Sed nec vocibus excitata blandis,
> Molli pollice nec rogata, surgit.[4]

It was at Rome a signification of favour to depress and turn in the thumbs,—

> Fautor utroque tuum laudabit pollice ludum,[5]
>
> "Thy patron, when thou mak'st thy sport,
> Will with both thumbs applaud thee for't,"

and of disfavour to elevate and thrust them outward:—

> converso pollice vulgi
> Quemlibet occidunt populariter.[6]
>
> "The vulgar with reverted thumbs
> Kill each one that before them comes."

The Romans exempted from war all such as were maimed in the thumbs, as having no longer sufficient strength to hold

[1] *Annals*, xii. 47.
[2] Ateius Capito, *apud* Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, vii. 13.
[3] "To be powerful."
[4] Martial, xii. 98. 8. The verses are too free to be translated, in however free a version.
[5] Horace, *Ep.* i. 18, 66.
[6] Juvenal, iii. 36.

their weapons. Augustus confiscated the estate of a Roman knight, who had wilfully cut off the thumbs of two young children he had, to excuse them from going into the armies.[1] And before him, the senate, in the time of the Italian war, had condemned Caius Vatienus to perpetual imprisonment, and confiscated all his goods, for having purposely cut off the thumb of his left hand, to exempt himself from that expedition.[2]

Some one, I forget who,[3] having won a naval battle, cut off the thumbs of all his vanquished enemies, to render them incapable of fighting and of handling the oar. The Athenians also caused the thumbs of those of Ægina to be cut off, to deprive them of the precedence in the art of navigation.[4]

In Lacedemonia, pedagogues chastised their scholars by biting their thumbs.[5]

CHAPTER XXVII.

COWARDICE THE MOTHER OF CRUELTY.

I HAVE often heard it said that cowardice is the mother of cruelty; and I have found, by experience, that that malicious and inhuman animosity and fierceness is usually accompanied with a feminine weakness. I have seen the most cruel people, and upon very frivolous occasions, very apt to cry. Alexander, the tyrant of Pheres, durst not be a spectator of tragedies in the theatre, for fear lest his citizens should see him weep at the misfortunes of Hecuba and Andromache,

[1] Suetonius, *in Vitâ*, c. 24.

[2] Valerius Max. v. 3, 3. It is supposed that the term *poltroon* is derived from the Latin words expressing this circumstance—*pollicis tronco*.

[3] Philocles, one of the Athenian generals in the Peloponesian war. Plutarch, *Life of Lysander*.

[4] Cicero, *de Off.* iii. 11. Val. Max. ix 2, *ext.* 8.

[5] Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, c. 14.

who himself caused so many people every day to be murdered without pity.[1] Is it meanness of spirit that renders them so pliable to all extremities? Valour, whose effect is only to be exercised against resistance,—

Nec nisi bellantis gaudet cervice juvenci,[2]

"Neither, unless he fight,
In conquering a bull doth take delight,"

stops when it sees the enemy at its mercy; but pusillanimity, to say that it was also in the action, not having dared to meddle in the first act, that of danger, rushes into the second, that of blood and massacre. The execution after victories is commonly performed by the rascality and hangers-on of an army; and that which causes so many unheard-of cruelties in domestic wars is that the rout are flushed in being up to the elbows in blood, and ripping up bodies that lie prostrate at their feet, having no sense of any other valour:—

Et lupus, et turpes instant morientibus ursi,
Et quæcunque minor nobilitate fera est;[3]

"None but the wolves, the filthy bears, and all
The baser beasts, will on the dying fall;"

like cowardly house-curs, that in the house worry and tear the skins of wild beasts they durst not come near in the field. What is it in these times of ours that causes our quarrels to be all mortal? and that whereas our fathers had some degree in their revenge, we now begin with the last in ours, and that at the first meeting nothing is said but "Kill?" what is this but cowardice?

Every one is sensible that there is more bravery and disdain in subduing an enemy than in cutting his throat, and in making him yield than in putting him to the sword; besides that the appetite of revenge is better satisfied and pleased, because its only aim is to make itself felt; and this is the reason why we do not fall upon a beast or a stone when it

[1] Plut. *Life of Pelopidas*, c. 15.
[2] Claudian, *Ep. ad Hadrianum*, v. 39.
[3] Ovid. *Trist.* iii. 5, 35.

hurts us, because they are not capable of being sensible of our revenge; and to kill a man is to save him from the injury and offence we intend him. And as Bias[1] cried out to a wicked fellow, "I know that, sooner or later, thou wilt have thy reward, but I am afraid I shall not see it;" and pitied the Orchomenians, that the penitence of Lyciscus for the treason committed against them, came in a season when there was no one remaining alive of those who had been interested in the offence, and whom the pleasure of this penitence should have affected; so revenge is to be repented of when the person on whom it is executed is deprived of the means of suffering under it; for as the avenger will look on to enjoy the pleasure of his revenge, so the person on whom he takes revenge should be a spectator too, to be afflicted and to repent. "He will repent it," we say; but because we have given him a pistol-shot through the head do we imagine he repents? On the contrary, if we but observe we shall find that he makes a mouth at us in falling; and so far from penitence, that he does not so much as repine at us; and we do him the kindest office of life, which is to make him die insensibly and suddenly. We have afterwards to hide ourselves, and run from place to place, from the officers of justice, who pursue us, whilst he is at rest. Killing is good to frustrate an offence to come, not to revenge one that is already past; 'tis more an act of fear than bravery, of precaution than courage, and of defence than attempt. It is manifest that by it we quit both the true end of revenge and the care of our reputation; we are afraid if he lives he will do us another injury as great as the first; 'tis not out of animosity to him, but care of thyself, that thou riddest him out of the way.

Revenge is rendered of no effect by killing an enemy.

In the kingdom of Narsingua this expedient would be useless to us; where not only soldiers, but tradesmen also, end

[1] Plutarch, *on the Delay of Divine Justice*, c. 2. Montaigne is mistaken in supposing that Bias pitied the *Orchomenians*; it is Patroclus, one of the interlocutors in the dialogue, who cites this example of the tardy vengeance of the gods on the traitor Lyciscus.

their differences by the sword. The king never denies the field to any that will fight; and sometimes, when they are persons of quality, looks on, rewarding the victor with a chain of gold; but for the which any one that will may fight with him again; by which means, by having come off from one combat, he becomes engaged in many.

Duels common in the kingdom of Narsingua.

If we thought by virtue to be always masters of our enemies, and to triumph over them at pleasure, we should be sorry they should escape from us as they do, by dying. We have a mind to conquer, but more with safety than honour; and in our quarrel more pursue the end than the glory.

Asinius Pollio, who, being a worthy man, was the less to be excused, committed a like error; who, having written a libel against Plancus, forbore to publish it till he was first dead; which was to bite one's thumb at a blind man, to rail at one that is deaf, and to wound a man that has no feeling, rather than to run the hazard of his resentment. So it was said about him: "That it was only for hobgoblins to wrestle with the dead."[1] He that stays to see the author die whose writings he intends to question, what does he say, but that he is as weak as quarrelsome? It was told Aristotle that some one had spoken ill of him: "Let him do more," said he,[2] "let him whip me too, provided I am not there."

Pollio's libel against Plancus.

Our fathers contented themselves to revenge an insult with a lie, the lie with a box of the ear, and so forward; they were valiant enough not to fear their adversary living and provoked; we tremble for fear so long as we see them on foot; and that this is so, does not our noble practice of these days, equally to prosecute to death both him that has offended us and him we have offended, make it out? 'Tis also a kind of cowardice that has introduced the custom of seconds, thirds, and fourths, in our duels; they were formerly duels; they are

[1] It was Plancus himself who made this answer. Pliny, *Preface to Vespasian.*

[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, ix. 18.

Seconds introduced in duels by cowardice.

now skirmishes, rencounters, and battles. Solitude was doubtless terrible to those who were the first inventors of this practice, *quum in se cuique minimum fiduciæ esset;* "they had little confidence in themselves;" for naturally any company whatever is comfortable in danger. Third persons were formerly called in to prevent disorder and foul play only, and to be witness of the fortune of the combat; but since they have brought it to this pass that these themselves engage, whoever is invited cannot handsomely stand by as an idle spectator, for fear of being suspected either of want of affection or courage. Besides the injustice and unworthiness of such an action, of engaging other force and valour in the protection of your honour than your own, I conceive it a disadvantage to a brave man, and who only relies upon himself, to shuffle his fortune with that of a second; every one runs hazard enough in himself, without hazarding for another, and has enough to do to assure himself in his own valour for the defence of his life, without intrusting a thing so dear in a third man's hand. For, if it be not expressly agreed upon before to the contrary, 'tis a combined party of all four, and if your second be killed, you have two to deal withal, with good reason; and to say that it is foul play, it is so indeed; as it is, well-armed, to charge a man that has but the hilt of a sword in his hand, or, clear and untouched, a man that is desperately wounded; but if these be advantages you have got by fighting, you may make use of them without reproach. The disparity and inequality is only weighed and considered from the condition of the combatants when they began; as to the rest, you may take your fortune; and though you alone had three enemies upon you at once, your two companions being killed, you have no more wrong done you than I should do, in a battle, by running a man through I should see engaged with one of our own men, with the like advantage. The nature of society will have it so; where there is troop against troop,[1] as where our Duke of

[1] Monstrelet, vol. i. c. 9.

Orleans challenged Henry, King of England, a hundred against a hundred; three hundred against as many, as the Argians against the Lacedemonians;[1] and three to three, as the Horatii against the Curiatii, the multitude on either side is considered but as one single man; the hazard everywhere, where there is company, being confused and mixed.

I have a domestic interest in this discourse; for my brother, the Sieur de Matecoulom, was at Rome invited by a gentleman, with whom he had no great acquaintance, and who was defendant, and challenged by another, to be his second. In this duel he found himself matched with a gentleman much better known to him;—I wish they would give me some reason for these laws of honour, which so frequently run counter to all reason.—After having dispatched his man,[2] seeing the two principals still on foot and sound, he ran in to disengage his friend. What could he do less? Should he have stood still, and, if chance would have ordered it so, have seen him he was come thither to defend, killed before his face? What he had hitherto done signified nothing to the business; the quarrel was yet undecided. The courtesy that you can and certainly ought to show to your enemy, when you have reduced him to an ill condition, and have a great advantage over him, I do not see how you can show, where the interest of another is in the case, where you are only called in as an assistant, and the quarrel is none of yours. He could neither be just nor courteous at the hazard of him he was to serve; and so he was enlarged from the prisons of Italy at the speedy and solemn request of our king. Indiscreet nation! We are not content to make our vices and follies known to the world by report only, but we must go into foreign countries, there to show them what fools we are! Put three Frenchmen into the deserts of Lybia, they will not live a month together without fighting; so that

A story of a duel between some French gentlemen, in which a brother of Montaigne was engaged.

[1] For the Plain of Thyrea. Herod. i. 82. Pausanias, x. 9. *Athenæus*, xv. 6.

[2] The details of this duel may be found in Brantome, On Duels.

you would say that this peregrination was a thing purposely designed to give strangers the pleasure of our tragedies, and for the most part such as rejoice and laugh at our miseries. We go into Italy to learn to fence, and fall to practice at the expense of our lives before we have learned it; and yet by the order of discipline, we should put the theory before the practice; we discover ourselves to be but learners:—

> Primitiæ juvenis miseræ, bellique propinqui
> Dura rudimenta! [1]
>
> "O curs'd essay of arms, disastrous doom!
> Prelude of bloody fields and fights to come!
> Hard elements of inauspicious war!"

I know 'tis an art very useful to its end; (in a duel betwixt two princes, cousins-german, in Spain, the elder, says Livy,[2] by his skill and dexterity in arms, easily surmounted the greater and less managed strength of the younger;) and an art of which the knowledge, as I experimentally know, hath inspired some with courage above their natural measure; but this is not properly valour, because it supports itself upon address, and is founded upon something besides itself. The honour of combat consists in the jealousy of courage, and not of skill; and therefore I have known a friend of mine, famed as a great master in this exercise, in his quarrels make choice of such arms as might deprive him of this advantage, and that wholly depended upon fortune and assurance, that they might not attribute his victory rather to his skill in fencing than his valour. When I was young, gentlemen avoided the reputation of good fencers, as injurious to them; and learned with all imaginable privacy to fence, as a trade of subtlety, derogating from true and natural valour:—

> Non schivar, non parar, non ritirarsi
> Voglion costor, ne qui destrezza ha parte;
> Non danno i colpi or finti, or pieni, or scarsi;
> Togli e l' ira e' l' furor l' uso dell' arte.
> Odi le spade orribilmente urtarsi
> A mezzo il ferro; il pie d' orma non parte;

[1] *Æneid*, xi. 156.

[2] Livy, xxviii. 21

Sempre è il pie fermo, e la man sempre in moto;
Nè scende taglio in van, nè punta a voto.[1]

"They neither shrunk, nor vantage sought of ground,
They travers'd not, nor skipt from part to part,
Their blows were neither false nor feigned found,
Fury and rage would let them use no art.
Their swords together clash with dreadful sound,
Their feet stand fast, and neither stir nor start,
They move their hands, steadfast their feet remain,
Nor blow nor foin they struck, nor thrust in vain."

Butts, tilting, and barriers, the images of warlike fights, were the exercises of our forefathers; this other exercise is so much the less noble that it only respects a private end; that it teaches us to ruin one another, against law and justice, and that it every way always produces very ill effects. It is much more worthy and becoming to exercise ourselves in things that rather strengthen than weaken our government, and that tend to the public safety and common glory. Publius Rutilius, consul, was the first that taught the soldiers to handle their arms with skill, and joined art to valour; not for the use of private quarrel, but for war, and the quarrels of the people of Rome;[2] a popular and patriotic art of defence; and besides the example of Cæsar,[3] who commanded his men to aim chiefly at the face of Pompey's soldiers in the battle of Pharsalia, a thousand other commanders have also bethought them to invent new forms of weapons, and new ways of striking and defending, according as occasion required.

But as Philopœmen[4] condemned wrestling, wherein he excelled, because the preparatives that are therein employed were different from those that appertain to military discipline, to which alone he conceived men of honour ought to apply themselves, so it seems to me that this address to which we form our limbs, those twistings and motions which young men are taught in this new school, are not only of no use, but

[1] Tasso, *Gerusal.* c. 12, st. 55.
[2] Val. Max. ii. 3, 2.
[3] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 12.
[4] Id. *ib.*

rather the contrary, and hurtful to the manner of fight in battle; our people, too, commonly make use of particular weapons, peculiarly designed for this purpose; and I have known, when it has been disapproved that a gentlemen, challenged to fight with rapier and poniard, should appear in the equipage of a man at arms; or that another should take his cloak instead of a poniard. It is worthy of consideration that Laches, in Plato, speaking of learning to fence after a manner like ours, says that he never knew any great soldier come out of that school, especially the masters of it; and indeed, as to them, our own experience tells us as much. As to the rest, we may at least conclude that they are qualities of no relation nor correspondence; and, in the education of the children of his government, Plato[1] interdicts the art of boxing, introduced by Amycus and Epeius, and that of wrestling, by Antæus and Cercyo, because they have another end than to render youth fit for the service of war, and contribute nothing to it. But I see I am somewhat strayed from my theme.

The art of boxing interdicted by Plato.

The Emperor Maurice, being advertised by dreams and several prognostics, that one Phocas, an obscure soldier, should kill him, questioned his brother-in-law, Philippicus, who this Phocas was, and what his nature, qualities, and manners; and so soon as Philippicus, amongst other things, had told him that he was cowardly and timorous, the emperor immediately thence concluded that he was then a murderer and cruel.[2] What is that that makes tyrants so bloody? 'Tis only the solicitude of their own safety, and that their faint hearts can furnish them with no other means of securing themselves than in exterminating those that may hurt them, even so much as to women, for fear of a scratch;—

Cowards naturally cruel and bloody.

Cuncta ferit, dum cuncta timet.[3]

"He strikes at all, who every one does fear."

[1] *Laws*, vii.

[2] Zonaras and Cedrenus, *H. of the Emp. Maurice.*

[3] Claud. *in Eutrop.* i. 182.

The first cruelties are exercised for themselves; thence springs the fear of a just revenge, which afterwards produces a series of new cruelties to obliterate one another. Philip, king of Macedon, who had so much to do with the people of Rome, agitated with the horror of so many murders committed by his appointment, and doubting of being able to keep himself secure from so many families, at divers times mortally injured and offended by him, resolved to seize all the children of those he had caused to be slain, to dispatch them daily one after another, and so to establish his own repose.[1]

One act of cruelty necessarily produces others.

Fine matter is never impertinent, however placed; and therefore I, who more consider the weight and utility of what I deliver than its order and connection, need not fear in this place to bring in a fine story, though it be a little by the by; for when they are rich in their own native beauty, and are able to justify themselves, the least end of a hair will serve to draw them into my argument.

Amongst others condemned by Philip, Herodicus, prince of Thessaly, had been one; he had moreover, after him, caused his two sons-in-law to be put to death, each leaving a son very young behind him; Theoxena and Archo were their two widows. Theoxena, though highly courted to it, could not be persuaded to marry again. Archo married Poris, the greatest man among the Ænians, and by him had a great many children, which she, dying, left in a tender age. Theoxena, moved with a maternal charity towards her nephews, that she might have them under her own eyes, and in her own protection, married Poris. Presently comes a proclamation of the king's edict. This brave-spirited mother suspected the cruelty of Philip, and, afraid of the insolence of the soldiers towards these fine and tender children, boldly declared that she would rather kill them with her own hands than deliver them. Poris, startled at this protestation, promised her to steal them away, and to transport them to Athens, and

[1] Livy, xl. 8.

there commit them to the custody of some faithful friend of his. They took therefore the opportunity of an annual feast, which was celebrated at Ænia in honour of Æneas, and thither they went. Having appeared by day at the public ceremonies and banquet, they stole at night into a vessel prepared for that purpose, to escape away by sea. The wind proved contrary, and finding themselves in the morning within sight of the land from whence they had launched over night, were made after by the guards of the port. At their approach, Poris laboured all he could to make the mariners do their utmost to escape from the pursuers; but Theoxena, frantic with affection and revenge, recurring to her former resolution, prepared arms and poison, and exposing these before them: "Come, my children," said she, "death is now the only means of your defence and liberty, and shall administer occasion to the gods to exercise their sacred justice; these sharp swords, these full cups will open you the way to it; courage, fear nothing. And thou, my son, who art the eldest, take this steel into thy hand, that thou may'st the most bravely die." The children, having on one side so powerful a counsellor, and the enemy at their throats on the other, ran all of them eagerly upon what was next to hand, and, half dead, were thrown into the sea. Theoxena, proud of having so gloriously provided for the safety of all her children, clasping her arms with great affection about her husband's neck: "Let us, my friend," said she, "follow these boys, and enjoy the same sepulchre they do." And, so embraced, threw themselves headlong overboard into the sea; so that the ship was carried back empty of the owners into the harbour.

Tyrants contrive to lengthen the torments of those they put to death.

Tyrants, at once both to kill and to make their anger felt, have pumped their wits to invent the most lingering deaths. They will have their enemies dispatched, but not so fast that they may not have leisure to taste their vengeance.[1] And therein they are mightily perplexed, for if the torments they inflict are vio-

[1] An allusion to Caligula's saying, "I wish them to feel themselves dying."

lent, they are short; if long, they are not then so painful as they desire; and thus they torment themselves in contriving how to torment others. Of this we have a thousand examples of antiquity, and I know not whether we, unawares, do not retain some traces of this barbarity.

All that exceeds a simple death appears to me pure cruelty. Our law cannot expect that he whom the fear of being executed, by being beheaded or hanged, will not restrain, should be any more awed by the imagination of a languishing fire, burning pincers, or the wheel. And I know not, in the mean time, whether we do not throw them into despair; for in what condition can the soul of a man, expecting four-and-twenty hours together to be broke upon a wheel, or, after the old way, nailed to a cross, be? Josephus relates [1] that in the time of the war the Romans made in Judea, happening to pass by where they had three days before crucified certain Jews, he amongst them knew three of his own friends, and obtained the favour of having them taken down; of whom two, he says, died, the third lived a great while after.

Chalcondylas, a writer of good credit, in the records he has left behind him of things that happened in his time, and near him,[2] tells us, as of the most excessive torment, of what the Emperor Mechmet very often practised, of cutting off men in the middle, by the diaphragm, with one blow of a scimitar; by which it happened that they died, as it were, two deaths at once, and both the one part and the other, says he, were seen to stir and struggle a great while after, in very great torment. I do not think there was any great suffering in this motion; the torments that are most dreadful to look on are not always the greatest to endure; and I find those that other historians relate to have been practised upon the Epirot lords, to be more horrid and cruel, where they were condemned to be flayed alive by pieces, after so malicious a manner that they continued fifteen days in this misery.

[1] In the *History of his Life*, towards the end.

[2] *Hist. of the Turks*, x. at the beginning.

As also these two others: Crœsus,[1] having caused a gentleman, the favourite of his brother Pantaleon, to be seized, carried him into a fuller's shop, where he caused him to be scratched and carded with cards and combs belonging to that trade till he died. George Sechel, chief commander of the peasants of Poland, who committed so many mischiefs under the title of the crusade, being defeated in battle, and taken by the waywode of Transylvania, was for three days bound naked upon the rack, exposed to all sorts of torments that any one could contrive against him, during which time many other prisoners were kept fasting. In the end, he living and looking on, they made his beloved brother Lucat, for whom only he entreated, taking upon himself the blame of all their evil actions, to drink his blood; and caused twenty of his most favoured captains to feed upon him, tearing his flesh in pieces with their teeth, and swallowing the morsels. The remainder of his body and bowels, so soon as he was dead, were boiled, and others of his followers compelled to eat them.[2]

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ALL THINGS HAVE THEIR SEASON.

Such as compare Cato the Censor with the younger Cato that killed himself, compare two beautiful natures, and much resembling one another. The first acquired his reputation several ways, and excels in military exploits and the utility of his public avocations; but the virtue of the younger, besides that it were blasphemy to compare any to him in vigour, was much more

The virtue of Cato of Utica preferable to that of Cato the Censor.

[1] Herod. i. 92.

[2] *Chronicle of Carion*, book iv. p. 700. Cureus, *Annals of Silesia*, p. 238.

pure and unblemished; for who can acquit the Censor of envy and ambition, having dared to jostle the honour of Scipio, a man in worth, valour, and all other excellent qualities, infinitely beyond him, or any other of his time?

That which they report of him, amongst other things, that, in his extreme old age, he put himself upon learning the Greek tongue with a greedy appetite, as if to quench a long thirst,[1] does not seem to make much for his honour; it being properly what we call being twice a child. All things have their season, even the best; and a man may say his Paternoster out of time; as they accused T. Quintus Flaminius,[2] that, being general of an army, he was seen praying apart in the time of a battle that he won:—

Imponet finem sapiens et rebus honestis.[3]

"The wise man limits even proper things."

Eudemonidas, seeing Xenocrates, when very old, still very intent upon his school-lessons, "When will this man be wise," said he, "if he is still learning?"[4] And Philopœmen, to those who extolled King Ptolemy for every day inuring his person to the exercise of arms, "It is not," said he, "commendable in a king of his age to exercise himself in those things; he ought now really to employ them."[5] The young are to make their preparations, the old to enjoy them, say the sages;[6] and the greatest vice they observe in us is that our desires incessantly grow young again; we are always re-beginning to live.

Our studies and desires should sometimes be sensible of age. We have one foot in the grave, and yet our appetites and pursuits spring every day new upon us:—

Tu secanda marmora
Locas sub ipsum funus, et, sepulchri
Immemor, struis domos:[7]

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Cato the Censor*, c. 1.
[2] Plutarch, *Parallel of T. Q. Flaminius and Philopœmen*.
[3] Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 444.
[4] Plutarch, *Apoth. of the Lacedæm.*
[5] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*.
[6] Seneca, *Epist.* 36.
[7] Horace, *Od.* ii. 18, 17.

"Command the pillar'd dome to rise,
When, lo! the tomb forgotten lies."

The longest of my designs is not above a year's extent; I think of nothing now but ending, rid myself of all new hopes and enterprises, take my last leave of every place I depart from, and every day dispossess myself of what I have: *Olim jam nec perit quidquam mihi, nec acquiritur . . . plus superest viatici quam viæ;*[1] "Henceforward I will neither lose nor get: I have more wherewith to defray my journey, than I have way to go:—

Vixi, et, quem dederat cursum fortuna, peregi.[2]

"I've lived, and finish'd the career
Wherein my fortune placed me here."

To conclude; 'tis the only comfort I find in my old age, that it mortifies in me several cares and desires wherewith life is disturbed; the care how the world goes, the care of riches, of grandeur, of knowledge, of health, of myself. There are some who are learning to speak, at a time when they should learn to be silent for ever. A man may always study, but he must not always go to school.[3] What a contemptible thing is an old abecedarian!

Diversos diversa juvant; non omnibus annis
Omnia conveniunt:[4]

"For several things do several men delight;
And all things are not for all ages right."

What ought to be an old man's study.

If we must study, let us study what is suitable to our present condition, that we may answer as he did, who, being asked to what end he studied in his decrepitage: "That I may go out better," said he, "and at greater ease." Such a study was that of the younger Cato, feeling his end approach, and which he met with in Plato's Discourse of the Immortality of the Soul; not, as we are to believe, that he was not long beforehand

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 77.
[2] *Æneid*, iv. 653.
[3] Montaigne translates Seneca, *Epist.* 36.
[4] *Pseudo.* Gallus, i. 104.

furnished with all sorts of ammunition for such a departure; for of assurance, an established will and instruction, he had more than Plato in all his writings; his knowledge and courage were in this respect above philosophy; he applied himself to his study, not for the service of his death; but, as a man whose sleeps were never disturbed in the importance of such a deliberation, he also, without choice or change, continued his studies with the other accustomary actions of his life. The night[1] that he was denied the prætorship, he spent in play; that wherein he was to die, he spent in reading; the loss either of life or of office was all one to him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF VIRTUE.

I FIND, by experience, that there is a vast difference betwixt the starts and sallies of the soul and a resolute and constant habit; and very well perceive there is nothing we may not do; nay, even to the surpassing the Divinity itself, says some one,[2] forasmuch as it is more to render a man's self impassable by his own study and energy, than to be so by his natural condition; and even to be able to conjoin to man's imbecility and frailty a godly resolution and assurance; but it is by fits and starts; and in the lives of those heroes of times past, there are sometimes miraculous sallies, and that seem infinitely to exceed our natural force; but they are indeed but sallies; and 'tis hard to believe that in these so elevated qualities a man can so thoroughly imbue the soul that they should become constant, and, as it were,

Man seldom attains to a capacity of acting steadily and regularly, according to the principles of solid virtue.

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 71, 104.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 78, *de Provid.* c. 5.

natural in him. It accidentally happens even to us, who are but abortive births of men, sometimes to dart out our souls, when roused by the discourses and examples of others, much beyond their ordinary stretch; but 'tis a kind of passion that pushes and pricks them on, and in some sort ravishes them from themselves; for this whirlwind once blown over, we see that they insensibly flag and slacken of themselves, if not to the lowest degree, at least so as to be no more the same; insomuch as that, upon every trivial occasion, the losing of a hawk, or the breaking of a glass, we suffer ourselves to be moved little less than one of the common sort. I am of opinion that order, moderation, and constancy excepted, all things are to be done by a man that is indifferent and defective in general. "Therefore it is," say the sages, "that to make a right judgment of a man, you are chiefly to observe his common actions, and surprise him in his every day habits." [1]

Pyrrho, he who erected so pleasant a knowledge upon ignorance, endeavoured, as all the rest who were really philosophers did, to make his life correspond with his doctrine. And because he maintained the imbecility of human judgment to be so extreme as to be incapable of any choice or inclination, and would have it wavering and suspended, considering and receiving all things as indifferent, 'tis said that he always comported himself after the same manner and countenance; if he had begun a discourse, he would always end what he had to say, though the person he was speaking to had gone away; and if he walked, he never stopped for any impediment that stood in his way, being preserved from precipices, the jostle of carts, and other like accidents, by the care of his friends; [2] for to fear or to avoid any thing had been to jostle his own propositions, which deprived the senses themselves of all certainty and election. Sometimes

[1] Diog. Laert. ix. 63.

[2] Yet Montaigne says, in the twelfth chapter of this book, that they who represent Pyrrho in this light extend his doctrine beyond what it really was; and that, like a rational man, he made use of all his corporeal and spiritual faculties as rule and reason.

he suffered incisions and cauteries with so great constancy as never to be seen so much as to wince or shut his eyes. 'Tis something to bring the soul to these imaginations, 'tis more to join thereto the effects; and yet not impossible; but to conjoin them with such perseverance and constancy as to make them habitual is certainly, in attempts so remote from common custom, almost incredible to be done. Therefore it was that being one day taken in his house terribly scolding with his sister, and being reproached that he therein transgressed his own rules of indifference: "What!" said he, "must this foolish woman also serve for a testimony to my rules?" Another time, being seen defending himself against a dog, "It is," said he, "very hard totally to put off man; and we must endeavour and force ourselves to resist and encounter things first by effects, but at least by reason."[1] About seven or eight years since, a husbandman, who is still living, but two leagues from my house, having been long tormented with his wife's jealousy, coming one day home from his work, and she welcoming him with her accustomed railing, entered into so great fury that, with a sickle he had yet in his hand, he totally cut off all those parts that she was jealous of, and threw them in her face. And 'tis said that a young gentleman of our nation, brisk and amorous, having by his perseverance at last mollified the heart of a fair mistress, enraged that upon the point of fruition he found himself unable to perform, and that

Extraordinary effects produced by a sudden resolution.

Non viriliter
Iners senile penis extulerat caput,[2]
"The part he most had need of play'd him false,"

so soon as ever he came home, he deprived himself of it and sent it his mistress, a cruel and bloody victim for the expiation of his offence. If this had been done upon a mature consideration, and upon the account of religion, as the priests of Cybele did, what should we say of so high an action?

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, ix. 66. [2] Tibul. *Priap* carm. 84.

A few days since, at Bergerac, within five leagues of my house, up the river Dordogne, a woman having over-night been beaten and abused by her husband, a choleric, ill-conditioned fellow, resolved to escape from his ill usage at the price of her life; and going, so soon as she was up the next morning, to visit her neighbours, as she was wont to do, and having let some words fall as to recommending to them her affairs, she took a sister of hers by the hand and led her to the bridge; where being, and, as it were in jest, without any manner of alteration in her countenance, there taking leave of her, she threw herself headlong from the top into the river, and was drowned. That which is the most remarkable in this is that this resolution was a whole night maturing in her head.

It is quite another thing with the Indian women; for it being the custom there for the men to have many wives, and the best beloved of them to kill herself at her husband's decease, every one of them makes it the business of her whole life to obtain this privilege, and gain this advantage over her companions; and the good offices they do their husbands aim at no other recompense but to be preferred in accompanying them in death:—

Ubi mortifero jacta est fax ultima lecto,
Uxorum fusis stat pia turba comis:
Et certamen habent lethi, quæ viva sequatur
Conjugium; pudor est non licuisse mori;
Ardent victrices, et flammæ pectora præbent,
Imponuntque suis ora perusta viris.[1]

"When to the pile they throw the kindling brand,
The pious wives with hair dishevell'd stand,
Striving which living shall in death attend
Her spouse, and gain an honourable end;
Those thus preferred their breasts to flame expose,
And their scorched lips to their dead husband's close."

A certain author of our times reports that he has seen in those oriental nations this custom in practice, that not only the wives bury themselves with their husbands, but even

[1] Propertius, iii. 13, 17.

the slaves he has enjoyed also, which is done after this manner: The husband being dead, the widow may, if she will (but few do), demand two or three months respite, wherein to order her affairs. The day being come, she mounts on horseback, dressed as for her wedding, and with a cheerful countenance says she is going to sleep with her spouse, holding a looking-glass in her left hand, and an arrow in the other; being thus conducted in pomp, accompanied with her kindred and friends, and a great concourse of people, rejoicing, she is at last brought to the public place appointed for such spectacles. This is a spacious square, in the midst of which is a pit full of wood, and adjoining to it a mount raised four or five steps, upon which she is brought and served with a magnificent repast; which being done, she falls to dancing and singing, and gives order when she thinks fit to kindle the fire. This being performed, she descends, and taking the nearest of her husband's relations by the hand, they walk together to the river close by, where she strips herself stark naked, and, having distributed her clothes and jewels to her friends, plunges herself into the water, as if there to cleanse herself from her sins; coming out thence, she wraps herself in yellow linen of eight and twenty ells long; and again giving her hand to this kinsman of her husband's, they return back to the mount, where she makes a speech to the people, and recommends her children to them, if she have any. Betwixt the pit and the mount there is commonly a curtain drawn, to screen the burning furnace from their sight, which some of them, to manifest their great courage, forbid. Having ended what she has to say, a woman presents her with a vessel of oil, wherewith to anoint her head and her whole body; which having done with, she throws it into the fire, and in an instant precipitates herself after. Immediately the people throw a great many billets and logs upon her, that she may not be long in dying, and convert all their joy into sorrow and mourning. If they are persons of meaner condition, the body of the defunct is carried to the place of sepulture,

and there placed sitting, the widow kneeling before him, and embracing the corpse closely, and thus remains, while they build round them a wall, which so soon as it is raised to the height of the woman's shoulders, some of her relations come behind her, and, taking hold of her head, writhe her neck; and so soon as she is dead the wall is presently raised up and closed, where they remain entombed.

The Gymnosophists voluntarily burnt.

There was in the same country, something like this in their Gymnosophists; for not by constraint of others, nor by the impetuosity of a sudden humour, but by the express profession of their order, their custom was, so soon as they arrived at a certain age, or that they saw themselves threatened by any disease, to cause a funeral pile to be erected for them, and on the top a stately bed, where, after having joyfully feasted their friends and acquaintance, they lay them down with so great resolution that, fire being applied to it, they were never seen to stir hand or foot;[1] and after this manner one of them, Calanus by name, expired in the presence of the whole army of Alexander the Great.[2] And he was neither reputed holy nor happy amongst them that did not thus destroy himself; dismissing his soul, purged and purified by the fire, after having consumed all that was earthly and mortal. This constant premeditation of the whole life is that which makes the wonder.

Amongst our other controversies, that as to the word *fatum* is also crept in; and, to tie things to come, and even our own wills, to a certain and inevitable necessity, we are still upon this argument of time past: "Since God foresees that all things shall so fall out, as doubtless he does, it must then necessarily follow that they must so fall out." To which our masters reply, "That the seeing any thing should come to pass, as we do, and as God himself also does (for, all things being present with him, he rather sees than foresees), is not to compel an event; that is, we see because things do fall

[1] Quint. Curt. viii. 9; Strabo, xv. [2] Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, c. 21.

out, but things do not fall out because we see; events cause knowledge, but knowledge does not cause events. That which we see happen does happen; but it might have happened otherwise; and God, in the catalogue of the causes of events, which he has in his presence, has also those which we call accidental and involuntary, which depend upon the liberty he has given our free-will, and knows that we shall do amiss, because we would do so."

Now I have seen a great many commanders encourage their soldiers with this fatal necessity; for, if our time be limited to a certain hour, neither the enemy's shot, nor our own boldness, nor our flight and cowardice, can either shorten or prolong our lives. This is easily said, but see who will be so persuaded; and if it be so that a strong and lively faith draws along with it actions of the same, certainly this faith we so much brag of is very light in this age of ours, unless the contempt it has of works makes it disdain their company. So it is that to this very purpose, the Sieur de Joinville, as credible a witness as any other whatever, tells us of the Bedouins, a nation amongst the Saracens, with whom the king St. Louis had to do in the Holy Land, that they in their religion did so firmly believe the number of every man's days to be from all eternity prefixed and set down by an inevitable decree, that they went naked to the wars, excepting a Turkish sword, and their bodies only covered with a white linen cloth; and, for the greatest curse they could utter when they were angry, this was always in their mouth: "Accursed be thou, as he that arms himself for fear of death."[1] This is a testimony of faith very much beyond ours. And of this sort is that, also, that two monks of Florence gave in our fathers' days.[2] Being engaged in some controversy of learning, they agreed to go both of them into the fire, in the public square, to prove the faith of each in his

[1] *Mem. de Joinville*, c. 30.

[2] On the 7th April, 1498. See the history of the famous Jerome Savonarola, in the *Mem. of Comines*, viii. c. 19; Guicciardini, iii.; Bayle, at the word *Savonarola*; Sismondi, *Republiques Italiennes*, c. 98, vol. xii.

arguments; and all things were prepared, and the thing just upon the point of execution, when it was interrupted by an unexpected accident.

A young Turkish lord, having performed a notable exploit in his own person in the sight of both armies, that of Amurath and that of Huniades, ready to join battle, being asked by Amurath, who, in so tender and inexperienced years (for it was his first sally in arms), had inspired him with so brave a courage, replied that his chief tutor for valour was a hare; "For being," said he, "one day a hunting I found a hare sitting, and though I had a brace of excellent greyhounds with me, yet methought it would be best for sureness to make use of my bow; for she sat very fair. I then fell to letting fly my arrows, and shot forty that I had in my quiver, not only without hurting, but without starting her from her form. At last I slipped my dogs after her, but to no more purpose than I had shot. By which I understood that she had been secured by her destiny; and that neither darts nor swords can wound without the permission of fate, which we can neither hasten nor defer." This story may serve to let us see, by the way, how flexible our reason is to all sorts of images. A person of great years, name, dignity, and learning, boasted to me to have been induced to a certain very important mutation in his faith, by a strange, whimsical incitement, and otherwise so very inconclusive, that I thought it much stronger the contrary way; he called it a miracle, and I too, but in another sense. The Turkish historians say that the persuasion those of their nation have imprinted in them of the fatal and unalterable prescription of their days does manifestly conduce to the giving them great assurance in dangers. And I know a great prince who makes a very fortunate use of it; whether it be that he does really believe it, or that he makes it his excuse for so wonderfully hazarding himself; may fortune be not too soon weary of her favour to him.

The common foundation of the courage of the Turks.

There has not happened in our memory a more admirable

effect of resolution than in those two who conspired the death of the Prince of Orange.[1] 'Tis to be wondered at how the second that executed it, could ever be persuaded into an attempt wherein his companion, who had done his utmost, had had so ill success; and after the same method, and with the same arms, to go attack a prince, armed with so recent cause of distrust, powerful in followers and bodily strength, in his own hall, amidst his guards, and in a city wholly at his devotion. He assuredly employed a very resolute arm and courage, inflamed with furious passion. A poniard is sure for striking home; but, by reason that more motion and force of hand is required than with a pistol, the blow is more subject to be put by and hindered. That this man went to a certain death I make no doubt; for the hopes any one could flatter him withal could not find place in any sober understanding; and the conduct of his exploit sufficiently manifests that he had no want of that, any more than of courage. The motives of so powerful a persuasion may be diverse, for our fancy does what it will both with itself and us. The execution that was done near Orleans was nothing like this;[2] there was in that more of chance than vigour; the wound was not mortal if fortune had not made it so; and the attempt to shoot on horseback, and at a distance, and at one whose body was in motion by the moving of his horse, was the attempt of a man who had rather miss his blow than fail of saving himself, as was apparent by what followed after; for he was so astonished and stupefied with the thought of so high an execution, that he totally lost his judgment, both to find his way and govern his tongue. What needed he to have done more than to fly back to his friends and cross the river? 'Tis what I have done in less dangers, and I think of very little hazard, how broad soever the river may be, provided your horse have good going in, and that you see on the other side

[1] The founder of the Republic of Holland. On the 18th March, 1582, he was wounded with a pistol-shot by a Biscayan, named Tean de Jaureguy. Recovering from this, he was killed on the 10th July, 1584, by a pistol-shot, in his house at Delft, by Balthazar Gerard, a native of Franche-Compté.

[2] The assassination of the Duke of Guise, by Poltrot.

good landing according to the stream. The other,[1] when they pronounced his dreadful sentence: "I was prepared for it," said he; "and I will make you wonder at my patience."

A people who believe assassination the surest path to Paradise.

The Assassins, a nation bordering upon Phœnicia, are reputed amongst the Mahometans, a people of great devotion and purity of manners. They hold that the nearest way to gain Paradise is to kill some one of a contrary religion; which is the reason they have often been seen, being but one or two, without arms, to make an attempt against powerful enemies at the price of a certain death, and without any consideration of their own danger. So was our Count Raimond of Tripoli assassinated (which word is derived from their name), in the heart of his city, during our enterprises of the holy war.[2] And likewise Conrad, marquis of Montserrat,[3] the murderers at their execution carrying themselves with great pride and glory that they had performed so brave an exploit.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF A MONSTROUS CHILD.

This story shall go by itself; for I will leave physicians to discourse of it. Two days ago I saw a child which two men and a nurse, who called themselves the father, the uncle, and the aunt of it, carried about to get money by showing it, by reason it was so strange a creature. It was, as to all the rest, of a common form, and could stand upon its feet; could go and gabble much like other children of its age; it had never as yet taken any other nourishment but from the nurse's

[1] Gerard.
[2] In 1151, at Tripoli.
[3] At Tyre, 24th April, 1192.

breasts, and what, in my presence, they tried to put into its mouth, it only chewed a little and spit out again without swallowing; its cry, indeed, seemed a little odd and particular; it was just fourteen months old. Under the breast it was joined to another child, but without a head, and that had the spine of the back without motion, the rest entire; for though it had one arm shorter than the other, this was broken by accident at their birth; they were joined breast to breast, as if a lesser child would reach its arms about the neck of one something bigger. The juncture and thickness of the place where they were conjoined was not above four fingers, or thereabouts, so that if you thrust up the imperfect child you might see the navel of the other below it; so the joining was betwixt the paps and the navel. The navel of the imperfect child could not be seen, but all the rest of the belly could; so that all the rest that was not joined of the imperfect one, as arms, buttocks, thighs, and legs, hung dangling upon the other child, and might reach to the mid-leg. The nurse moreover told us that it urined at both bodies; and also the members of the other were nourished, sensible, and in the same plight with that she gave suck to; excepting that they were shorter and less. This double body, and several limbs belonging to one head, might be interpreted a favourable prognostic to the king,[1] of maintaining the various parts of our state under the union of his laws; but lest the event should prove otherwise, 'tis better to let it alone; for, except in things past, there is no divination: *Ut, quum facta sunt, tum ad conjecturam aliqua interpretatione revocentur*,[2] "so as, when they are come to pass, they should then by some interpretation be recalled to conjecture," as 'tis said of Epimenides, that he always prophesied of things past.[3]

I have lately seen a herdsman in Medoc, of about thirty years of age, who has no sign of any genital parts; he has three holes, by which he voids his water; he is bearded, has desire, and covets the society of women.

[1] Henry III.
[2] Cicero, *de Divin.* ii. 81.
[3] Aristotle, Rhetoric, iii. 12.

Whether there are monsters properly so called.

Those that we call monsters are not so to God, who sees in the immensity of his work the infinite forms that he has comprehended therein; and it is to be believed that this figure which astonishes us has relation to some other of the same kind unknown to man. From his omniscience nothing but the good, the usual, and the regular proceeds; but we do not discern the disposition and relation: *Quod crebro videt non miratur, etiamsi, cur fiat, nescit. Quod antè non vidit, id, si evenerit, ostentum esse censet.*[1] "What he often sees he does not admire, though he be ignorant how it comes to pass. But when a thing happens he never saw before, that he looks upon as a portent." What falls out contrary to custom we say is contrary to nature; but nothing, whatever it be, is contrary to her. Let therefore this universal and natural reason expel the error and astonishment that novelty brings along with it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF ANGER.

PLUTARCH is admirable throughout, but especially where he judges of human actions. The fine things he says in the parallel of Lycurgus and Numa, upon the subject of our great folly in abandoning children to the care and government of their fathers, are very easily discerned. The most of our civil governments, as Aristotle says,[2] leave, after the manner of the Cyclops, to every one the ordering of their wives and children according to their own foolish and indiscreet fancy; and the Lacedemonian and Cretensian are almost the only governments that have committed the education of chil-

[1] Cicero, *ut supra*.

[2] *Ethics*, x. 9.

dren to the laws; who does not see that in a state all depends upon their nurture and bringing up? And yet they are left to the mercy of parents, let them be as foolish and wicked as they will, without any check.

Of the indiscretion of parents, who punish their children in the madness of passion.

Amongst other things, how often have I, as I have passed along the streets, had a good mind to get up a farce, to revenge the poor boys whom I have seen flayed, knocked down, and miserably beaten, by some father or mother mad with rage! You shall see them come out with fire and fury sparkling in their eyes,

> Rabie jecur incendente, feruntur
> Præcipites; ut saxa jugis abrupta, quibus mons
> Subtrahitur, clivoque latus pendente recedit,[1]

> "As when impetuous winds and driving rain
> Have mined a rock that overhung the plain,
> The massy ruin falls with thundering force,
> And bears down all that interrupts its course,"

(and, according to Hippocrates, the most dangerous maladies are those that disfigure the countenance,) with a roaring and terrible voice, very often against those that are but just come from nurse. And there they are lamed and spoiled with blows, whilst our justice takes no cognizance of it, as if these maims and dislocations were not executed upon members of our commonwealth:—

> Gratum est, quod patriæ civem populoque dedisti,
> Si facis ut patriæ sit idoneus, utilis agris,
> Utilis et bellorum et pacis rebus agendis.[2]

> "True, you have given a citizen to Rome,
> And she shall thank you if the youth become,
> By your o'er-ruling care, or soon or late,
> An useful member of the parent state:
> Fit to assist the earth in her increase,
> And proper for affairs of war and peace."

There is no passion that so much transports men from their right judgments as anger. No one would demur at punishing

[1] Juvenal, vi. 647. [2] Id. xiv. 70.

a judge with death who should condemn a criminal upon the account of his own choler; why any more then should parents and pedants be allowed to whip and chastise children in their anger? 'Tis then no longer correction, but revenge. Chastisement is instead of physic to children; and should we endure a physician who should be animated against and enraged at his patient?

The faults of the person whom we punish in anger seem to us different from what they are in reality.

We ourselves, to do well, should never lay a hand upon our servants whilst our anger lasts; whilst the pulse beats quick, and that we feel an emotion in ourselves, let us defer the business; things will appear otherwise to us when we are calm and cool. 'Tis then passion that commands, 'tis then passion that speaks, and not we; faults seen through passion are magnified, and appear much greater to us than they really are, as bodies do being seen through a mist. He who is hungry uses meat; but he that will make use of correction should have no appetite, either of hunger or thirst, to it. And, moreover, chastisements that are inflicted with deliberation and discretion are much better received, and with greater benefit, by him who suffers; otherwise he will not think himself justly condemned by a man transported with anger and fury; and will allege his master's excessive passion, his inflamed countenance, his unwonted oaths, his emotion and precipitous rashness, for his own justification:—

> Ora tument ira, nigrescunt sanguine venæ,
> Lumina Gorgoneo sævius igne micant.[1]
>
> "Rage swells the lips, with black blood fill the veins,
> And in their eyes fire worse than Gorgons' reigns."

Suetonius reports,[2] that Caius Rabirius having been condemned by Cæsar, the thing that most prevailed upon the people, to whom he had appealed, to determine the cause in his favour, was the animosity and vehemency that Cæsar had manifested in that sentence.

[1] Ovid, *de Arte Am.* iii. 503.

[2] *Life of Cæsar*, c. 12.

Saying is one thing, doing another; we are to consider the sermon and the preacher distinctly. Those men took a pretty business in hand who in our times have attempted to shake the truth of our church by the vices of her ministers; she draws her proofs elsewhere; 'tis a foolish way of arguing, and that would throw all things into confusion; a man whose manners are good may have false opinions, and a wicked man may preach truth, nay, though he believe it not himself. 'Tis doubtless a fine harmony when doing and saying go together; and I will not deny but that saying, when action follows, is of greater authority and efficacy; as Eudamidas said, hearing a philosopher talk of military affairs: "These things are finely said, but he that speaks them is not to be believed, for his ears have never been used to the sound of the trumpet."[1] And Cleomenes, hearing an orator declaiming upon valour, burst out into laughter; at which the other, being angry, "I should," said he to him, "do the same if it were a swallow that spoke of this subject; but if it were an eagle I should willingly hear him."[2] I perceive, methinks, in the writings of the ancients that he who speaks what he thinks strikes much more home than he that only dissembles. Hear but Cicero speak of the love of liberty; hear Brutus speak of it; his very writings sound that this man would purchase it at the price of his life. Let Cicero, the father of eloquence, treat of the contempt of death, and let Seneca do the same; the first languishingly drawls it out, so that you perceive he would make you resolve upon a thing on which he is not resolved himself; he inspires you not with courage, for he himself has none; the other animates and inflames you. In the same way, I never read an author, of those who treat of virtue and of great actions, that I do not closely examine what kind of man he was himself; for the Ephori at Sparta seeing a dissolute fellow propose a wholesome advice to the people, commanded

A digression on Plutarch's good nature and equity.

Parallel of Cicero and Seneca.

[1] Plutarch, *Apoth. of the Lacedem.* [2] Id. ib.

him to hold his peace, and entreated a virtuous man to attribute to himself the invention, and to propose it.[1]

Plutarch's writings, if well understood, sufficiently speak their author; and so that I think I know him even into his soul, and yet I could wish that we had some account of his life. And I am thus far wandered from my subject, upon the account of the obligation I have to Aulus Gellius for having left us in writing this story of his manners, that has a bearing on my subject of anger:[2]—A slave of his, a vicious, ill-conditioned fellow, but that had the precepts of philosophy often ringing in his ears, having for some offence of his been stripped by Plutarch's command, whilst he was whipping muttered at first that it was without cause, and that he had done nothing to deserve it; but at last falling in good earnest to exclaim against, and to rail at, his master, he reproached him that he was no philosopher, as he had boasted himself to be; that he had often heard him say it was indecent to be angry, nay, had writ a book to that purpose; and that causing him to be so cruelly beaten in the height of his rage totally gave the lie to all his writings. To which Plutarch calmly and coldly answered, "How, knave!" said he, "by what dost thou judge that I am now angry? Does either my face, my colour, or my voice, give any manifestation of my being moved? I do not think my eyes look fierce, that my countenance appears troubled, or that my voice is dreadful. Am I red? do I foam? does any word escape my lips I ought to repent? Do I start? do I tremble with fury? For those, I tell thee, are the true signs of anger." And so turning to the fellow that was whipping him, "Ply on thy work," said he, "whilst this gentleman and I dispute." This is the story.[3]

Plutarch reproached for anger by a slave of his.

Archytus Tarentinus, returning from a war wherein he had been captain-general found all things in his house in

[1] Aulus Gellius, xviii. 3.
[2] Id. i. 26.
[3] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 36. Val. Max. iv. 1. *ext* 1.

very great disorder, and his lands quite out of tillage, through the ill husbandry of his steward; whom having caused to be called to him, "Go," said he; "if I were not in anger I would soundly drub your sides."[1] Plato likewise, being highly offended with one of his slaves, gave Speusippus orders to chastise him, excusing himself from doing it because he was in anger.[2] And Charillus, a Lacedemonian, to a Helot, who carried himself insolently and audaciously towards him; "By the gods!" said he, "if I were not angry I would immediately put thee to death."[3]

That correction never ought to be given in anger.

'Tis a passion that is pleased with and flatters itself. How often, being moved under a false cause, if the person offending makes a good defence, and presents us with a just excuse, are we vexed at truth and innocence itself? In proof of which, I remember a marvellous example of antiquity: Piso, otherwise a man of very eminent virtue, being moved against a soldier of his, for that returning alone from forage he could give him no account where he had left his companion, took it for granted that he had killed him, and presently condemned him to death. He was no sooner mounted upon the gibbet but behold his wandering companion arrives; at which all the army were exceedingly glad, and after many embraces of the two comrades, the hangman carried both the one and the other into Piso's presence, all the assistants believing it would be a great pleasure even to him himself; but it proved quite contrary; for, through shame and spite, his fury, which was not yet cool, redoubled; and, by a subtlety which his passion suddenly suggested to him, he made three criminal for having found one innocent, and caused them all to be dispatched. The first soldier, because sentence had passed upon him; the second, who had lost his way, because he was the cause of his companion's death; and the hangman, for not having obeyed the order given him.

Such as have had to do with testy women may have ex-

[1] Seneca, *de Ira*, iii. 12. [2] Plutarch, *Apotheg* [3] Id. *ib.*

The fury of women provoked by your not answering them.

perienced into what a rage it puts them to oppose silence and coldness to their fury, and for a man to disdain to nourish their anger. The orator Celius was wonderfully choleric by nature; and to one who supped in his company, a man of gentle and sweet conversation, and who, that he might not move him, approved and consented to all he said; he, impatient that his ill-humour should thus spend itself without aliment: "For the love of the gods! contradict me in something," said he, "that we may be two."[1] Women, in like manner, are only angry that others may be angry again, in imitation of the law of love. Phocion, to one that interrupted his speaking by injurious and very opprobrious words made no other return than silence, and to give him full liberty and leisure to vent his spleen; which he having accordingly done, and the storm blown over, without any mention of this disturbance, he proceeded in his discourse where he had left off before.[2] No answer can nettle a man like such contempt.

Of the most choleric man in France (anger is always an imperfection, but more excusable in a soldier, for in that trade it cannot sometimes be avoided), I often say that he is the most patient man that I know, and the most discreet in bridling his passions; which agitate him with so great violence and fury,—

> Magno veluti cum flamma sonore
> Virgea suggeritur costis undantis aheni,
> Exultantque æstu latices, furit intus aquai,
> Fumidus, atque altè spumis exuberat amnis;
> Nec jam se capit unda; volat vapor ater ad auras;[3]
>
> "So when unto the boiling caldron's side
> A crackling flame of brushwood is applied,
> The bubbling liquors there like springs are seen
> To swell and foam to higher tides within;
> Above the brims they force their fiery way,
> Black vapours climb aloft, and cloud the day;"

that he must of necessity cruelly constrain himself to moder-

[1] Seneca, *de Ira*, iii. 8.
[2] Plutarch, *Inst. to those who manage State Affairs.*
[3] *Æneid*, vii. 462.

ate it. And, for my part, I know no passion which I could with so much violence to myself attempt to cover and conceal; I would not set wisdom at so high a price; and do not so much consider what he does, as how much it costs him to do no worse.

Another boasted himself to me of the regularity and sweetness of his manners, which is in truth singular; to whom I replied, "That it was indeed something, especially in persons of so eminent quality as himself, upon whom every one had their eyes, to present himself always well-tempered to the world; but that the principal thing was to make provision for within and for himself; and that it was not well, in my opinion, to order his business so as inwardly to grate himself, which I was afraid he did in putting on and outwardly maintaining this mask and appearance of calm."

A man incorporates anger by concealing it, as Diogenes said to Demosthenes, who, for fear of being seen in a tavern, withdrew himself into it: "The more you retire the farther you enter in."[1] I would rather advise that a man should give his servant a box of the ear a little unseasonably than wreck his fancy to represent this grave and composed countenance; and had rather discover my passions than hide them at my own expense; they grow less in venting and manifesting themselves; and 'tis much better their point should act without than be turned against ourselves within: *Omnia vitia in aperto leviora sunt; et tunc perniciosissima quum, simulata sanitate, subsidunt.*[2] "All vices are less dangerous when open to be seen, and then most pernicious when they lurk under a dissembled good temper."

Rules to be observed in the discovery of anger against domestics.

I admonish all those in my family who have authority to be angry, in the first place to manage their anger, and not to lavish it upon every occasion, for that lessens the effect; rash and constant scolding runs into custom, and renders itself despised; what you lay on a servant for a theft is not felt,

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, vi. 34. [2] Seneca, *Ep.* 56.

because it is the same he has seen you a hundred times employ against him for having ill-washed a glass, or set a stool out of place; secondly, that they are not angry to no purpose, but make sure that their reprehensions reach him with whom they are offended; for ordinarily they rail and bawl before he comes into their presence, and continue scolding an age after he is gone:—

Et secum petulans amentia certat:[1]

"And petulant madness with itself contends:"

they attack his shadow, and push the storm in a place where no one is either chastised or interested, but in the clamour of their voice. I likewise in quarrels condemn those who huff and vapour without an enemy; these rhodomontades should be reserved to discharge upon the offending party:—

Mugitus veluti cum prima in prælia taurus
Terrificos ciet, atque irasci in cornua tentat,
Arboris obnixus trunco, ventosque lacessit
Ictibus, et sparsa ad pugnam proludit arena.[2]

"So doth the bull, in his lov'd female's sight,
Proudly he bellows, and preludes the fight:
He tries his mighty horns against a tree,
And meditates his absent enemy:
He pushes at the winds; he digs the strand
With his black hoofs, and spurns the yellow sand."

The author's anger on great and little occasions.

When I am angry, my anger is very sharp, but withal very short, and as private as I can; I lose myself, indeed, in promptness and violence, but not in trouble, so that I throw out all sorts of injurious words at random, and without choice, and never consider pertinently to dart my language where I think it will deepest wound; for I commonly make use of no other weapon in my anger than my tongue. My servants have a better bargain of me in great occasions than in little; the little ones surprise me; and the mischief on't is that, when you are once over the precipice, 'tis no matter who gave you the push, for

[1] Claudian, *in Eutrop.* i. 237. [2] *Æneid*, xii. 103.

you always go to the bottom; the fall urges, moves, and makes haste of itself. In great occasions this satisfies me, that they are so just, every one expects a reasonable indignation; and then I glorify myself in deceiving their expectation; against these I fortify and prepare myself; they disturb my head, and threaten to transport me very far, should I follow them; I can easily contain myself from entering into one of these passions, and am strong enough, when I expect them, to repel their violence, be the cause never so great; but if a passion once prepossess and seize me, it carries me away, be it for never so small a matter; I bargain thus with those who may have to contend with me: "When you see me first moved, let me alone, right or wrong; I'll do the same for you." The storm is only begot, by concurrence of angers, which easily spring from one another, and are not born together; let every one have his own way, and we shall be always at peace. A profitable advice, but hard to execute. Sometimes, also, it falls out that I put on a seeming anger, for the better governing of my house, without any real emotion. As age renders my humours more sharp, I study to oppose them; and will, if I can, order it so that, for the future, I may be so much the less peevish and hard to please, as I have more excuse and inclination to be so, although I have heretofore been reckoned amongst those that have the greatest patience.

A word to conclude this chapter. Aristotle says[1] "that anger sometimes serves for arms to virtue and valour." 'Tis likely it may be so; nevertheless, they who contradict him[2] pleasantly answer that 'tis a weapon of novel use; for we move all other arms, this moves us; our hands guide it not, 'tis it that guides our hands; it holds us, we hold not it.

Whether wrath is proper to animate virtue and valour.

[1] *Ethics*, iii. 8.

[2] Seneca, de irâ, l. 16.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DEFENCE OF SENECA AND PLUTARCH.

THE familiarity I have had with these two authors, and the assistance they have lent to my age and to my book, wholly built up of what I have taken from them, oblige me to stand up for their honour.

As to Seneca, amongst a million of little pamphlets that those of the so-called reformed religion disperse abroad for the defence of their cause, and which sometimes proceed from so good a hand that 'tis pity his pen is not employed in a better subject, I have formerly seen one that, to complete the parallel he would fain make out betwixt the government of our late poor King Charles the Ninth and that of Nero, compares the late Cardinal of Lorraine with Seneca; their fortunes, in having both of them been prime ministers in the government of their princes, and their manners, conditions, and deportments, having been very near alike. Wherein, in my opinion, he does the said lord-cardinal a very great honour; for though I am one of those who have a very great esteem for his wit, eloquence, and zeal to religion and the service of his king, and think it was a happiness for the age wherein so new, so rare, and so necessary a person to the public lived, to have an ecclesiastical person, of so high birth and dignity, and so sufficient and capable of his place; yet, to confess the truth, I do not think his capacity by many degrees near to the other, nor his virtue either so pure, entire, or steady, as that of Seneca.

Now the book whereof I speak, to bring about its design, gives a very injurious description of Seneca, having borrowed his reproaches from Dion the historian, whose testimony I do not at all believe; for besides that he is inconsistent, after

having called Seneca one while very wise, and, again, a mortal enemy to Nero's vices, in making him elsewhere avaricious, an usurer, ambitious, effeminate, voluptuous, and a pretender to philosophy under false colours; his virtue manifests itself so lively and vigorous in his writings, and his vindication is so clear from any of these imputations of riches and excessive expenditure, that I cannot believe any testimony to the contrary; and, besides, it is much more reasonable to believe the Roman historians in such things, than Greeks and strangers; now, Tacitus and the rest speak very honourably both of his life and death,[1] and represent him to us a very excellent and virtuous person in all things; and I will allege no other reproach against Dion's report but this, which I cannot avoid, namely, that he has so sickly a judgment in the Roman affairs that he dares to maintain Julius Cæsar's cause against Pompey, and that of Anthony against Cicero.

Let us come to Plutarch. John Bodin[2] is a good author of our time, and a writer of much greater judgment than the rout of scribblers of his age, and deserves to be carefully read and considered; I find him, though, a little bold in that passage of his method of history where he accuses Plutarch not only of ignorance (wherein I would let him alone, for that is not in my line), but *that he often writes things incredible and absolutely fabulous;* these are his own words. If he had simply said things otherwise than they are, it had been no great reproach; for what we have not seen we are forced to receive from other hands, and take upon trust; and we know that he, on purpose, sometimes variously relates the same story; as in the judgment of the three best captains that ever were, given by Hannibal; 'tis one way in the life of Flaminius, and another way in that of Pyrrhus. But to charge him

[1] Tacitus, *Annals*, xiii. 11; xiv. 53; xv. 60. Even in Tacitus, however, there are terrible imputations against Seneca. *Annal.* xiv. 7, 11. See also the controversy respecting Seneca between La Harpe and Diderot.

[2] A celebrated jurisconsult of Angers, highly commended by D'Aguesseau. His *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, referred to by Montaigne, was published at Paris in 1566.

with having taken incredible and impossible things for current pay, is to accuse the most judicious author in the world of want of judgment. And this is his example: "As," says he, "when he relates that a Lacedemonian boy suffered his bowels to be torn out by a fox-cub he had stolen, and kept it still concealed under his robe till he fell down dead, rather than he would discover his theft."[1] I hold, in the first place, this example to be ill chosen, forasmuch as it is very hard to limit the power of the faculties of the soul, where we have greater power to limit and know the bodily force; and, therefore, if I had been he, I should rather have chosen an example of this second sort; of which there are that are less credible; as, amongst others, that which he relates of Pyrrhus, "that, all wounded as he was, he struck one of his enemies, who was armed from head to foot, so great a blow with his sword that he clave him down from his crown to his seat, so that the body was divided into two parts." In his example, I find no great miracle, nor do I admit of the salvo with which he excuses Plutarch, to have added this word, *as 'tis said*, to suspend our belief; for unless it be in things received by authority, and the reverence to antiquity or religion, he would never have himself admitted, or enjoined us things incredible in themselves to believe; and that this word, *as 'tis said*, is not put into this place to that effect, is easy to be seen, because he elsewhere relates to us, upon this subject, of the patience of the Lacedemonian children, examples happening in his time, more unlikely to prevail upon our faith; as what Cicero[2] has testified before him, as having, as he says, been at the place; that, even in his time, there were children found, who, in the trial of patience they were put to before the altar of Diana, suffered themselves to be there whipped till the blood ran down all over their bodies, not only without crying out, but without so much as a groan, and some till they there voluntarily lost their lives; and that which Plutarch, also, amongst a hun-

The patience of the Lacedemonian children.

[1] *Life of Lycurgus*, c. iv.

[2] *Tusc. Quæs.* ii. 14

dred other witnesses, relates that, at a sacrifice, a burning coal being fallen into the sleeve of a Lacedemonian boy, as he was censing, he suffered his whole arm to be burnt, till the smell of the broiling flesh was perceived by the assistants.[1] There was nothing, according to their custom, wherein their reputation was more concerned, nor for which they were to undergo more blame and disgrace, than in being taken in theft. I am so fully satisfied of the greatness of that people's courage that his story does not only not appear to me, as to Bodin, incredible; but I do not find it so much as rare and strange. History is full of a thousand more cruel and rare examples; it is, indeed, for such things, a miracle altogether.

Thievery much practised by the Egyptians.

Marcellinus,[2] concerning theft, reports that in his time there was no sort of torments which could compel the Egyptians, when taken in the fact, though a people very much addicted to it, so much as to tell their name.

Fortitude of a Spanish peasant,

A Spanish peasant, being put to the rack about the accomplices of the murder of the Prætor Lucius Piso, cried out in the height of the torment, "That his friends should not leave him, but look on in all assurance, and that no pain had power to force from him one word of confession;" which was all they could get the first day. The next day, as they were leading him a second time to another trial, strongly disengaging himself from the hands of his guards, he furiously ran his head against a wall, and beat out his brains![3]

Epicharis, having tired and glutted the cruelty of Nero's satellites, and undergone their fire, their beating, and their engines, a whole day together, without one syllable of confession of her conspiracy, being the next day brought again to the rack, with her limbs almost torn to pieces, conveying the

[1] Val. Max. iii. *ext.* 1, attributes this effort of endurance to a Macedonian boy, assisting at a sacrifice offered by Alexander.

[2] xxii. 16.

[3] Tacitus, *Annals*, iv 45

lace of her robe with a running noose over one of the arms of her chair, and suddenly slipping her head into it, with the weight of her own body hanged herself.[1] Having the courage to die after that manner, it is to be presumed that she purposely lent her life to the trial of her fortitude the day before, to mock the tyrant, and encourage others to the like attempt against him.

And whoever will inquire of our soldiers of the experiences they have had in our civil wars will find effects of patience and endurance in this miserable age of ours, and amongst the soft and more than Egyptianly effeminate rabble, worthy to be compared with those we have now related of the Spartan virtue.

and of certain peasants during the civil wars in Montaigne's time.

I know there have been simple peasants amongst us who have endured the soles of their feet to be broiled upon a gridiron, their fingers'-ends to be writhed off with the cock of a pistol, and their bleeding eyes squeezed out of their heads by the force of a cord twisted about their brows, before they would so much as consent to ransom. I have seen one left stark naked for dead in a ditch, his neck black and swollen, with a halter yet about it, with which they had dragged him all night at a horse's tail, his body wounded in a hundred places with stabs of daggers which had been given him, not to kill him, but to put him to pain and to affright him, who had endured all this, and even to being rendered speechless and insensible, resolved, as he himself told me, rather to die a thousand deaths (as, indeed, as to matter of suffering, he already had one) before he would pay a penny; and yet he was one of the richest husbandmen of all the country round. How many have been seen patiently to suffer themselves to be burnt and roasted for opinions taken upon trust from others, and by them not at all understood? I have known a hundred and a hundred women, for Gascony has a certain prerogative for obstinacy, whom you might

Women obstinate.

[1] Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 57.

sooner have made eat fire than forsake an opinion they had conceived in anger; they are more exasperated by blows and constraint; and he that made the story of the woman who, in defiance of all corrections, threats, and bastinadoes, ceased not to call her husband lousy knave, and that being plunged over head and ears in water yet lifted her hands above her head and made a sign of cracking lice, feigned a tale of which, in truth, we every day see a manifest image in the obstinacy of women. And obstinacy is the sister of constancy, at least in vigour and stability.

We are not to judge what is possible, and what is not, according to what is credible and incredible to our apprehension, as I have said elsewhere; and it is a great fault, and yet a fault that most men are guilty of (which, nevertheless, I do not mention with any reflection upon Bodin), to make a difficulty of believing that in another which they could not, or would not do themselves. Every one thinks that the sovereign stamp of human nature is imprinted in him, and that from it all others must take their rule; and that all proceedings which are not like his are feigned and false. What bestial stupidity! Is any thing of another's actions or faculties proposed to him? The first thing he calls to the consultation of his judgment is his own example; and as matters go with him so they must, of necessity, do with all the world besides. O dangerous and intolerable folly! For my part, I consider some men infinitely beyond me, especially amongst the ancients; and, though I clearly discern my inability to come near them by a thousand paces, I do not forbear to keep them in sight, and to judge of what elevates them so, of which I also perceive some seeds in myself; as I also do of the extreme meanness of some other minds, which I neither am astonished at nor yet disbelieve. I very well perceive the turns the former take to raise themselves to such a pitch, and admire their grandeur; and those flights that I think the bravest I seek to imitate; and, though I want wing, yet my judgment goes eagerly with them.

The other example he introduces, "of things incredible and wholly fabulous," delivered by Plutarch is "That Agesilaus was fined by the Ephori for having wholly engrossed the hearts and affections of the citizens to himself alone." I do not see what sign of falsity is to be found here; Plutarch speaks of things that must needs be better known to him than to us; and it was no new thing in Greece to see men punished and exiled for this very thing of being too acceptable to the people; witness the ostracism and petalism.[1]

Whether Plutarch, in his parallel of the Greeks and Romans, was unjust in the preferences he gave.

There is yet in this place another accusation laid against Plutarch, which I am especially affronted at; where Bodin says that he has faithfully paralleled the Romans and the Greeks amongst themselves; but not the Romans with the Greeks; witness, says he, Demosthenes and Cicero, Cato and Aristides, Sylla and Lysander, Marcellus and Pelopidas, Pompey and Agesilaus; supposing that he has favoured the Greeks in giving them so unequal companions. This is exactly to attack what in Plutarch is most excellent, and most to be commended; for in his parallels (which is the most admirable part of all his works, and with which, in my opinion, he is himself the most pleased), the fidelity and sincerity of his judgments equal their depth and weight; he is a philosopher that teaches us virtue. Let us see whether we cannot defend him from this reproach of falsity and prevarication. All that I can imagine could give occasion to this censure is the great and shining lustre of the Roman names which we have ever before us; it does not seem likely to us that Demosthenes could rival the glory of a consul, proconsul, and questor of that great republic; but, to consider the truth of the thing, and the men in themselves, which is Plutarch's chiefest aim, and more to balance their manners, their natures, and parts, than their fortunes, I think, contrary to Bodin, that Cicero and the elder Cato come very

[1] The ostracism prevailed at Athens, and was a sentence of political banishment for ten years. *Petalism*, which was in use at Syracuse, involved a banishment of five years only.

far short of the men with whom they are compared. I should sooner, for his purpose, have chosen the example of the younger Cato compared with Phocion; for in this couple there would have been a more likely disparity to the Roman's advantage. As to Marcellus, Sylla, and Pompey, I very well discern that their exploits of war are more dazzling, more full of pomp and glory, than those of the Greeks whom Plutarch compares with them; but the bravest and most virtuous actions, no more in war than elsewhere, are not always the most renowned; I often see the names of captains obscured by the splendour of other names of less desert; witness Labienus, Ventidius, Telesinus, and several others; and to take it by that, were I to complain on the behalf of the Greeks, could I not say that Camillus was much less comparable to Themistocles, the Gracchi to Agis and Cleomenes, and Numa to Lycurgus? But 'tis folly to judge of things that have so many aspects at one view.

When Plutarch parallels them, he does not for all that make them equal; who could more learnedly and conscientiously have marked their distinctions? Does he parallel the victories, feats of arms, the power of the armies conducted by Pompey, and his triumphs, with those of Agesilaus? "I do not believe," says he, "that Xenophon himself, if he were now living, though he was allowed to write whatever pleased him to the advantage of Agesilaus, would dare to bring them into comparison." Does he speak of paralleling Lysander to Sylla? "There is," says he, "no comparison, either in the number of victories, or in the hazard of battles; for Lysander only gained two naval engagements, &c." Assuredly, this is not derogatory from the Romans; in having only simply named them with the Greeks, he can have done them no injury, what disparity soever there may be betwixt them; and Plutarch does not entirely oppose them to one another; there is no preference in general; he only compares the pieces and circumstances one after another, and gives of

Plutarch did not mean an equality between those whom he compared together.

every one a particular and separate judgment. Wherefore, if any one would convict him of partiality, he ought to pick out some one of those particular judgments; or say, in general, that he was mistaken in comparing such a Greek to such a Roman, when there were others more fit and nigher resembling, to parallel him to.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE STORY OF SPURINA.

PHILOSOPHY thinks she has not made an ill use of her talent when she has given the sovereignty of the soul, and the authority of restraining our appetites to reason. Amongst which, they who judge that there are none more violent than those which spring from love have this opinion, also, that they seize both body and soul, and possess the whole man, so that even health itself depends upon them, and medicine is sometimes constrained to pimp for them; but a man might also say, on the contrary, that the mixture of the body brings an abatement and weakening; for such desires are subject to satiety, and capable of material remedies.

Whether the amorous appetites are the most violent.

Many, being determined to rid their soul from the continual alarms of this appetite, have made use of incision and amputation of the rebelling members; others have subdued their force and ardour by the frequent application of cold things, as snow and vinegar; the sackcloths of our ancestors were for this purpose, which is a cloth woven of horses'-hair, of which some of them made shirts, and others girdles to torture and correct their reins.

A prince, not long ago, told me that, in his youth, upon a

solemn festival in the court of King Francis the First, where everybody was very finely dressed, he took a fancy to put on his father's hair shirt, which was still kept in the house; but how great soever his devotion was, he had not patience to wear it till night, and was ill from it a long time after; adding withal, that he did not think there could be any youthful heat so fierce that the use of this recipe would not mortify; and yet perhaps he never essayed the most violent; for experience shows us that such emotions are often found under rude and slovenly clothes, and that a hair shirt does not always render those chaste that wear it.

Xenocrates proceeded with greater severity in this affair; for his disciples, to make trial of his continency, having slipped Laïs, that beautiful and famous courtezan, into his bed quite naked, excepting the arms of her beauty and her wanton allurements, her philters, finding that, in spite of his reason and philosophical rules, his unruly flesh began to mutiny, he caused those members of his to be burned that he found consenting to this rebellion.[1] Whereas the passions which wholly reside in the soul, as ambition, avarice, and the rest, find the reason much more to do, because it cannot there be relieved but by its own means; neither are those appetites capable of satiety, but grow sharper and increase by fruition.

Cæsar's example a proof that ambition is harder to be tamed than love.

The sole example of Julius Cæsar may suffice to demonstrate to us the disparity of those appetites; for never was man more addicted to amorous delights than he. Of which the delicate care he had of his person, to that degree of effeminacy as to make use of the most lascivious means to that end then practised, as to have the hairs of his whole body plucked off, and to be larded all over with perfumes with the extremest nicety, is one testimony;[2] and he was a beautiful person in himself, of a fair complexion, tall and sprightly, full faced, with quick hazel eyes, if we may believe Suetonius; for the statues that we see at Rome do not in all points answer this de-

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, iv. 7.

[2] Suetonius, *in Vitâ*. c. 45.

scription. Besides his wives, whom he four times changed, without reckoning the amours of his childhood with Nicomedes, king of Bithynia, he had the maidenhead of the renowned Cleopatra, queen of Egypt; witness the little Cæsario that he had by her;[1] he also made love to Eunoe, queen of Mauritania,[2] and at Rome to Posthumia, the wife of Servius Sulpitius; to Lollia, the wife of Gabinius; to Tertulla, the wife of Crassus; and even to Mutia, wife to the great Pompey; which was the reason, the Roman historians say, that she was repudiated by her husband, which Plutarch confesses to be more than he knew; and the Curios, father and son, afterwards reproached Pompey, when he married Cæsar's daughter, that he had made himself son-in-law to a man who had made him a cuckold; and one that he himself was wont to call Ægisthus; besides all these he entertained Servilia, Cato's sister, and mother to Marcus Brutus, whence every one believes, proceeded the great affection he had to Brutus, by reason that he was born at a time when it was likely he might be his son. So that I have reason, methinks, to take him for a man extremely given to this debauch, and of a very amorous constitution;[3] but the other passion of ambition, with which he was exceedingly infected, arising in him to contend with it, it was soon compelled to give way.

And here calling to mind Mahomet, who won Constantinople, and finally exterminated the Grecian name, I do not know where these two passions were so evenly balanced; equally an indefatigable lecher and soldier; but where they both meet in his life, and jostle one another, the quarrelling ardour always gets the better of the amorous passion; and this, though it was out of its natural season, never regained an absolute sovereignty over the other till he was arrived at an extreme old age, and unable to undergo the fatigues of war.

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Cæsar*, c. 13.
[2] Suetonius, *in Vitâ*, c. 50, 52, etc.
[3] When he entered Rome on his triumphal car the soldiers cried—

"Urbani, servate uxores: mœchum calvum adducimus."
Suetonius, *in Vitâ*.

What is related, for a contrary example of Ladislaus, king of Naples, is very remarkable; who being a great captain, valiant, and ambitious, proposed to himself, for the principal end of his ambition, the execution of his pleasure, and the enjoyment of some rare beauty. His death was of a piece; for having by a close and tedious siege, reduced the city of Florence to so great distress that the inhabitants were compelled to capitulate about surrender, he was content to let them alone, provided they would deliver up to him a virgin of excelling beauty he had heard of in their city; they were forced to yield to it, and by a private injury to divert the public ruin. She was the daughter of a famous physician of his time, who, finding himself involved in so foul a necessity, resolved upon a high attempt. As every one was laying a hand to trick up his daughter, and to adorn her with ornaments and jewels, to render her more agreeable to this new lover, he also gave her a handkerchief most richly wrought, and of an exquisite perfume, which she was to make use of at their first approaches, an implement they never go without in those parts; this handkerchief, poisoned with his utmost art, coming to be rubbed between the chafed flesh and open pores, both of the one and the other, so suddenly infused the poison, that immediately converting their warm into a cold sweat, they presently died in one another's arms.[1]

A notable example proving love to be stronger than ambition.

But I return to Cæsar. His pleasures never made him steal one minute of an hour, nor step one step aside, from occasions that might conduce any way to his advancement; that passion was so sovereign in him over all the rest, and with so absolute an authority possessed his soul, that it guided him at pleasure. In truth, this troubles me, when, as to every thing else, I consider the greatness of this man, and the wonderful parts wherewith he was endued, learned to that degree in all sorts of knowledge, that there is hardly any one science of which he has not

Cæsar's character.

[1] Colenuccio, *Hist. Neap.* v., who throws a doubt over the story.

written;[1] he was so great an orator, that many have preferred his eloquence to that of Cicero; and he, I conceive, did not think himself inferior to him in that particular, for his two Anti-Catos were chiefly written to counterbalance the elocution that Cicero had expended in his Cato. As to the rest, was ever soul so vigilant, so active, and so patient of labour as his? and doubtless it was embellished with many rare seeds of virtue, innate, natural, and not put on. He was singularly sober, and so far from being delicate in his diet, that Oppius relates,[2] that having one day at table medicinal instead of common oil set before him in some sauce, he ate heartily of it that he might not put his entertainer out of countenance; another time he caused his baker to be whipped for serving him with a finer than ordinary sort of bread. Cato himself used to say of him that he was the first sober man that ever made it his business to ruin his country. And as to the same Cato calling him one day *drunkard*, it fell out thus: being both of them one day in the senate, at a time when Catiline's conspiracy was in question, of which Cæsar was suspected, one came and brought him a letter sealed up; Cato believing that it was something the conspirators gave him notice of, called to him to deliver it into his hand; which Cæsar was constrained to do to avoid further suspicion; it was, by chance, a love-letter that Servilia, Cato's sister, had written to him; which Cato having read, he threw it back to him saying, "There, drunkard." This, I say, was rather a word of disdain and anger than an express reproach of this vice; as we often rate those that anger us with the first injurious words that come into our mouths, though nothing due to those we are offended at; to which may be added, that the vice which Cato cast in his dish is wonderfully near akin to that wherein he had trapped

[1] Suetonius, in his *Life of Cæsar*, speaks of his works in grammar, eloquence, history; his letters to the Senate, to Cicero, to his friends; his poems; a tragedy called *Œdipus*; a collection of apothegms, which Augustus prohibited the publication of. There has also been attributed to him a work *Upon Augurs*, and a *Cosmography*.

[2] *Apud* Suetonius. The various illustrations of Cæsar which follow are taken from the same author.

Cæsar; for Bacchus and Venus, according to the proverb, do very willingly agree; but with me Venus is most sprightly when I am most sober.

The examples of his sweetness and clemency to those by whom he had been offended are infinite; I mean besides those he gave during the time of the civil wars, which, as plainly enough appears by his writings, he practised to cajole his enemies, and to make them less afraid of his future dominion and victory. But I must also say that if these examples are not sufficient proofs of his natural mildness, they at least manifest a marvellous confidence and grandeur of courage in this person. He has often been known to dismiss whole armies, after having overcome them, to his enemies, without deigning so much as to bind them by oath, either to favour him, or even not to bear arms against him. He has three or four times taken some of Pompey's captains prisoners, and as often set them at liberty. Pompey declared all those to be his enemies who did not follow him to the war; Cæsar proclaimed all those to be his friends who sat still and did not actually take arms against him. To such captains of his as ran away from him to go over to the other side, he sent moreover their arms, horses, and equipage. The cities he had taken by force he left at full liberty to take which side they pleased, imposing no other garrison upon them but the memory of his generosity and clemency. He gave strict and express charge, the day of his great battle of Pharsalia, that, without the utmost necessity, no one should lay a hand upon the citizens of Rome. These, in my opinion, were very hazardous proceedings, and 'tis no wonder if those in our civil war, who, like him, fight against the ancient state of their country, do not follow his example; they are extraordinary means, which only belong to Cæsar's fortune and his admirable foresight in the conduct of affairs. When I consider the incomparable grandeur of his soul, I excuse victory that it could not disengage itself from him, even in so unjust and so wicked a cause.

To return to his clemency: we have many excellent examples in the time of his government, when all things being reduced to his power, he had no more need to dissemble. Caius Memmius had written very severe orations against him, which he had as sharply answered; yet he did not soon after forbear to use his interest to make him consul. Caius Calvus, who had composed several injurious epigrams against him, having employed many of his friends to mediate a reconciliation with him, Cæsar voluntarily persuaded himself to write first to him. And our good Catullus, who had so rudely ruffled him under the name of Mamurra,[1] coming to make his excuses to him, he made him the same day sit at his table.[2] Having intelligence of some who spoke ill of him, he did no more but only in a public oration declare that he had notice of it. He feared his enemies still less than he hated them; some conspiracies and cabals that were made against his life being discovered to him, he satisfied himself in publishing, by proclamation, that they were known to him, without further prosecuting the conspirators. As to the respect he had to his friends, Caius Oppius, being with him upon a journey, and finding himself ill, he gave him up the only room he had for himself, and lay all night upon the hard ground in the open air. As to what concerns his justice: he put a beloved servant of his to death for lying with a noble Roman's wife, though there was no complaint made. Never had man more moderation in his victory, nor more resolution in his adverse fortune.

Cæsar ruined by ambition.

But all these good inclinations were stifled and spoiled by his furious ambition, by which he suffered himself to be so transported and misled that a man may easily maintain that that passion guided the rudder of all his actions; of a liberal man, it made him a public thief to supply his bounty and profusion, and made him utter this vile and unjust saying, "That if the most wicked and profligate persons in the world had been faithful in serving him towards

[1] Catullus, *Carm.* 29. [2] Suetonius, *Cæsar*, c. 73.

his advancement, he would cherish and prefer them to the utmost of his power, as much as the best of men." It intoxicated him with so excessive a vanity, that he dared to boast, in the presence of his fellow-citizens, "That he had made the great commonwealth of Rome a name without form, and without body;" and to say "that his answers for the future should stand for laws," and also to receive the body of the senate coming towards him, sitting; to suffer himself to be adored, and to have divine honours paid to him in his own presence. In fine; this sole vice, in my opinion, spoiled in him the most rich and beautiful nature that ever was; and has rendered his name abominable to all good men, in that he would erect his glory upon the ruins of his country, and the subversion of the greatest and most flourishing republic the world shall ever see. There might, on the contrary, be many examples produced of great men whom pleasure has made to neglect the conduct of their affairs, as Mark Antony and others; but where love and ambition should be in equal balance, and come to jostle with equal forces, I make no doubt but the last would win the prize.

But to return to my subject. 'Tis much to bridle our appetites by the discourse of reason, or by violence to contain our members within their duty; but to lash ourselves to our neighbour's interest, and not only to divest ourselves of the charming passion that tickles us, of the pleasure we feel in being agreeable to others, and courted and beloved of every one; but also to conceive a hatred against the graces that produce that effect, and to condemn our beauty because it inflames others, of this, I confess, I have met with few examples; this is one. Spurina, a young man of Tuscany,

> Qualis gemma micat, fulvum quæ dividit aurum,
> Aut collo decus, aut capiti; vel quale per artem
> Inclusum buxo, aut Ericia terebintho,
> Lucet ebur,[1]
>
> "As shines a gem in yellow gold enchas'd,
> On neck or head, for decoration placed;

[1] *Æneid*, x. 184.

Or iv'ry, which by art doth lustre get,
Amidst a circle of Erician jet,"

being endowed with a singular beauty, and so excessive that the chastest eyes could not chastely behold its rays; not contenting himself with leaving so much flame and fever as he everywhere kindled without relief, entered into a furious spite against himself, and those great endowments nature had so liberally conferred upon him; as if a man were responsible to himself for the faults of others; and purposely slashed and disfigured, with many wounds and scars, the perfect symmetry and proportion that nature had so curiously imprinted in his face.

To give my opinion, I more admire at, than honour, such actions; such excesses are enemies to my rules. The design was conscientious and good, but certainly a little defective in prudence. What if his deformity served afterwards to make others guilty of the sin of hatred, or contempt, or of envy, at the glory of so commendable an action, or of calumny, interpreting this humour a mad ambition? Is there any form whence vice cannot, if it will, extract occasion to exercise itself, one way or other? It had been more just, and also more noble, to have made of these gifts of God a subject of regular and exemplary virtue.

They who retire themselves from the common offices, from that infinite number of rules, tiresome in many ways, that fetter a man of exact conduct in civil life, are in my opinion very discreet, what sharpness of constraint soever they impose upon themselves in so doing. 'Tis in some sort a kind of dying to avoid the pain of living well. But though these may be entitled to credit in other respects, to that of conquering difficulty I do not think there are; the real difficulty is in keeping one's self upright amidst the waves of the world, truly and exactly performing all the parts of one's duty. It is peradventure more easy to do without the other sex, altogether, than, having the enjoyment of a wife, to keep one's self entirely to that

They who secrete themselves from the common offices of society have the best bargain.

one woman. Sheer poverty is for the most part a far less anxious and discomforting state than a middling fortune; to use the goods of life rationally is much more difficult than entirely to do without them; moderation is a virtue that calls for a vast deal more effort to exercise it than suffering. The well-living of the younger Scipio has a thousand shapes; that of Diogenes but one;[1] this as much excels ordinary lives in simplicity as exquisite and accomplished lives excel it in utility and force.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OBSERVATION ON THE MODE OF CARRYING ON WAR ACCORDING TO JULIUS CÆSAR.

'Tis said of many great leaders, that they have had certain books in particular esteem, as Alexander the Great, Homer; Scipio Africanus, Xenophon; Marcus Brutus, Polybius; Charles the Fifth, Philip de Comines; and 'tis said that, in our times, Machiavel is elsewhere in repute. But the late Marshal Strozzi, who took Cæsar for his man, doubtless made the best choice; for that book ought to be the breviary of every great soldier, as being the true and sovereign pattern of the military art; and, moreover, God knows with what grace and beauty he has embellished that rich matter with so pure, delicate, and perfect expression, that, in my opinion, there are no writings in the world comparable to his, as to that.

Cæsar's Commentaries a proper lesson for every general.

I will set down some rare and peculiar passages of his wars that remain in my memory.

His army being in some consternation upon the rumour that was spread of the great forces that King Juba was lead-

[1] Valerius Max. iv. 5, ext. 1.

ing against him, instead of abating the notion which his soldiers had conceived at the news, and of lessening the forces of the enemy, having called them all together to encourage and reassure them, he took a quite contrary way to what we are used to do, for he told them that they needed no more to trouble themselves with inquiring after the enemy's forces, for that he was certainly informed thereof; and then told them of a number much surpassing the truth, and the report that was rumoured in his army;[1] following the advice of Xenophon; forasmuch as the imposture is not of so great importance to find an enemy weaker than we expected, as to find him really strong, after having been made to believe that he was weak.

The obedience of Cæsar's soldiers.

It was also his use to accustom his soldiers simply to obey, without taking upon them to control, or so much as to speak of their captain's designs, which he never communicated to them but upon the point of execution; and took a delight, if they discovered any thing of what he intended, immediately to change his orders, to deceive them; and to that purpose would often, when he had assigned his quarters in a place, pass forward and lengthen his day's march, especially if it was foul weather.

The Swiss, in the beginning of his wars in Gaul, having sent to him to demand a free passage over the Roman territories, though resolved to hinder them by force, he nevertheless spoke kindly to the messengers, and took some days' respite to return an answer, to make use of that time for calling his army together. These poor people did not know how good a husband he was of his time; for he often repeated, that it is the best part of a captain to know how to make use of occasions, and his diligence in his exploits are in truth unparalleled and incredible.

If he was not very conscientious in taking advantage of an enemy under colour of a treaty of agreement, he was as little in this, that he required no other virtue in a soldier, but val-

[1] Suetonius, *in Vitâ*, c. 68.

our only, and seldom punished any other faults but mutiny and disobedience. He would often, after his victories, turn them loose to all sorts of license, dispensing them, for some time, from the rules of military discipline withal, for he had soldiers so well trained up that, powdered and perfumed, they would run furiously to the fight. In truth he loved to have them richly armed, and made them wear engraved, gilded, and damask'd armour, to the end that the care of saving this might engage them to a more obstinate defence. Speaking to them, he called them by the name of fellow-soldiers, which we yet use; which his successor, Augustus, reformed, supposing he had only done it upon necessity, and to cajole those who only followed him as volunteers;

> Rheni mihi Cæsar in undis
> Dux erat: hic socius; facinus quos inquinat, æquat;[1]
>
> "Great Cæsar, who my gen'ral did appear
> Upon the banks of Rhine, 's my fellow here;
> For wickedness where it once hold does take
> All men whom it defiles does equal make;"

but that this fashion was too mean and low for the dignity of an emperor and general of an army; and therefore brought up the custom of calling them soldiers only.

With this courtesy Cæsar mixed great severity to keep them in awe; the ninth legion having mutinied near Placentia, he ignominiously cashiered them, though Pompey was then yet on foot, and received them not again to grace till after many supplications. He quieted them more by authority and boldness than by gentle ways.

In that place where he speaks of his passage over the Rhine towards Germany, he says that, thinking it unworthy of the honour of the Roman people to waft over his army in vessels, he built a bridge, that they might pass over dry-foot. There it was that he built that wonderful bridge, of which he gives a particular description; for he nowhere so willingly

[1] Lucan, v. 289.

insists upon his own actions as in representing to us the subtlety of his inventions in such kind of things.

I have also observed this, that he set a great value upon his exhortations to the soldiers before the fight; for where he should show that he was either surprised or hurried, he always brings in this, that he had not so much as leisure to harangue his army. Before that great battle with those of Tournay, "Cæsar," he says,[1] "having given orders for every thing else, presently ran where fortune carried him, to encourage his people, and meeting with the tenth legion, had no time to say any thing to them but this, that they should remember their wonted valour; not be astonished, but bravely sustain the enemy's encounter; and the enemy being already approached within a dart's cast, he gave the signal of battle; and going suddenly thence elsewhere to encourage others, he found that they were already engaged." His tongue has indeed done him notable service upon several occasions; and his military eloquence was in his own time so highly reputed that many of his army writ down his harangues as he spoke them, by which means there were volumes of them collected, that continued a long time after him. He had so particular a grace in speaking that they who were familiarly acquainted with him, and Augustus amongst others, hearing those orations read, could distinguish even to the phrases and words that were not his.

Exhortations to soldiers before a battle of great importance.

The first time that he went out of Rome with any public command, he arrived in eight days at the river Rhone, having with him in his coach a secretary or two before him, who were continually writing, and him that carried his sword behind him. And certainly, though a man did nothing but travel on, he could hardly have arrived at that promptitude with which, having been everywhere victorious, he left Gaul, and following Pompey to Brundusium, in eighteen days' time he subdued all

Cæsar's promptness in his expeditions.

[1] *De Bello Gallico*, iv. 17.

Italy, returned from Brundusium to Rome, and from Rome went through the very heart of Spain, undergoing extreme difficulties in the war against Afranius and Petreius, and in the long siege of Marseilles; thence he returned into Macedonia, beat the Roman army at Pharsalia; passed thence in pursuit of Pompey into Egypt, which he also subdued; from Egypt he went into Syria and Pontus, where he fought Pharnaces; thence into Africa, where he defeated Scipio and Juba; again returned through Italy into Spain, where he defeated Pompey's sons:—

> Ocyor et cœli flammis, et tigride fœta.[1]
>
> Ac veluti montis saxum de vertice præceps
> Cum ruit avulsum vento, seu turbidus imber
> Proluit, aut annis solvit sublapsa vetustas,
> Fertur in abruptum magno mons improbus actu,
> Exultatque solo silvas, armenta, virosque
> Involvens secum.[2]

> "Swifter than lightning, or the furious course
> Of the fell tigress when she is a nurse."

> "As when a fragment from a mountain torn
> By raging tempests, or a torrent borne;
> Or sapp'd by time, or loosen'd from the roots,
> Prone through the void the rocky ruin shoots;
> Rolling from crag to crag, from steep to steep,
> Down sink at once the shepherds and the sheep;
> Involv'd alike, they rush to nether ground,
> Stunn'd with the shock they fall, and, stunn'd, from earth rebound."

Speaking of the siege of Avaricum, he says,[3] that it was his custom to be night and day with the pioneers. In all enterprises of consequence he always reconnoitred in person, and never brought his army into quarters till he had first viewed the place; and, if we may believe Suetonius, when he passed over into England, he was the first man that sounded the shore where they landed.

He used to say that he more valued a victory obtained by

[1] Lucan, v. 405.
[2] *Æneid*, xii. 684.
[3] De Bello Gallico, vii. 24.

counsel than by force; and in the war against Petreius and Afranius, fortune presenting him with an occasion of manifest advantage, he declined it, saying,[1] "That he hoped, with a little more time and less hazard, to overthrow his enemies." He there also played a notable part, in commanding his whole army to pass the river by swimming, without any manner of necessity:—

> Rapuitque ruens in prœlia miles,
> Quod fugiens timuisset, iter; mox uda receptis
> Membra fovent armis, gelidosque à gurgite, cursu
> Restituunt artus.[2]

> "The soldier rushes through a pass to fight
> He would have been afraid t' have ta'en in flight;
> Then with his arms his wet limbs covers o'er,
> And his numb'd joints by rubbing doth restore."

I find him a little more temperate and considerate in his enterprises than Alexander; for the latter seems to seek and run headlong upon dangers, like an impetuous torrent that attacks and rushes against every thing it meets, without choice or discretion:—

> Sic tauriformis volvitur Aufidus,
> Qui regna Dauni perfluit Appuli,
> Dum sævit, horrendamque cultis
> Diluviem meditatur agris;[3]

> "So bounding Aufidus, who leaves
> The Daunian realms, fierce rolls his waves,
> When to the golden labours of the swain
> He meditates his wrath, and deluges the plain;"

but then he was a general in the flower and first heat of his youth, whereas Cæsar took up the trade at a ripe and well-advanced age; to which may moreover be added that Alexander was of a more sanguine, hot, and choleric constitution, apt to push him on to such extravagances, which he also inflamed with wine, from which Cæsar was very abstinent. But where necessary occasion required, never did any man venture his person more than he; indeed, for my part,

[1] *De Bello Civili*, 1, 72. [2] Lucan, iv. 151. [3] Horace, *Od.* iv. 14, 25.

methinks, I read in many of his exploits a determined resolution to throw his life away, to avoid the shame of being overcome. In his great battle with those of Tournay, he charged up to the head of the enemies without his shield, as he was surprised, seeing the van of his own army beginning to give ground; which also several times befell him. Hearing that his people were besieged, he passed through the enemy's army in disguise, to go and encourage them with his presence. Having crossed over to Dyrrachium with very slender forces, and seeing the remainder of his army, which he left to Antony's conduct, slow in following him, he undertook alone to repass the sea in a very great storm; and privately stole away to fetch the rest of his forces, the ports on the other side being seized by Pompey, and the whole sea being in his possession. And as to what he performed by force of hand, there are very many exploits that in hazard exceed all the rules of war; for with how small means did he undertake to subdue the kingdom of Egypt; and afterwards to attack the forces of Scipio and Juba, ten times greater than his? These people have had I know not what of more than human confidence in their fortune; and his usual saying was, that men must execute and not deliberate upon, high enterprises. After the battle of Pharsalia, when he had sent his army away before him into Asia, and was passing in one single vessel the strait of the Hellespont, he met Lucius Cassius at sea with ten great men-of-war, where he had the courage not only to stay his coming, but to stand up to him, and summon him to yield, which he did.

Having undertaken that furious siege of Alexia, where there were fourscore thousand men in garrison, and all Gaul being in arms to raise the siege, having set an army on foot of eight thousand horse and two hundred and forty thousand foot, what boldness and mad confidence was it in him that he would not give over his attempt and retire, in two so invincible difficulties, which nevertheless he underwent; and after having won that great battle against those without

soon reduced those within to his mercy.[1] The same happened to Lucullus at the siege of Tigranocerta against King Tigranes; but the condition of the enemy was not the same, considering the effeminacy of those with whom Lucullus had to deal.

I will here set down two rare and extraordinary events concerning this siege of Alexia; one, that the Gauls having drawn their powers together to encounter Cæsar, after they had made a general muster of all their forces, resolved in their council of war to dismiss a good part of this great multitude, that they might not fall into confusion.[2] This example of fearing being too many is new; but to take it right, it stands to reason that the body of an army should be of a moderate greatness, and regulated to certain bounds, both out of respect to the difficulty of providing for them, and the difficulty of governing them and keeping them in order. At least it is very easy to make it appear by example, that armies so monstrous in number have seldom done any thing to purpose. According to the saying of Cyrus in Xenophon, "'Tis not the number of men, but the number of good men, that gives the advantage;" the remainder serving rather to impede than assist. And Bajazet principally grounded his resolution of giving Tamerlane battle, contrary to the opinion of all his captains, upon this, that his enemy's numberless number of men gave him assured hopes of confusion. Scanderberg, a very good and expert judge in such matters, was used to say that ten or twelve thousand faithful fighting men were sufficient to a good leader, to secure his reputation in all sorts of military occasions. The other thing I will here record, which seems to be contrary both to the custom and the rules of war, is, that Vercingentorix, who was made general of all the parts of revolted Gaul, should go shut up himself in Alexia; for he who has the command of a whole country ought never to fix himself anywhere, but in case of the last extremity, and that

Monstrous armies of no great effect.

[1] *De Bello Gallico*, vii. 64. [2] Id. *ib.*

the only hope he had left is in the defence of that particular place; otherwise he ought to keep himself always at liberty, that he may have means to provide in general for all parts of his government.

To return to Cæsar. He grew in time more slow, and more considerate, as his friend Oppius bears witness; conceiving that he ought not easily to hazard the glory of so many victories, of which one blow of fortune might deprive him. 'Tis what the Italians say, when they would reproach the rashness and fool-hardiness of young people, calling them *bisognosi d'onore*, necessitous of honour; and that being in so great a want and dearth of reputation, they have reason to seek it at what price soever, which those ought not to do who have acquired enough already. There might reasonably then be some moderation, and some satiety, in his thirst and appetite of glory as well as in other things; and there are enough that practise it.

He was far remote from that religious observance of the ancient Romans, who would never prevail in their wars but by dint of true and simple valour; and yet he was more conscientious than we should be in these days, and did not approve all sorts of means to obtain a victory. In the war against Ariovistus, whilst he was parleying with him, there happened a great tumult, which was occasioned by the fault of Ariovistus's light horse; by which tumult Cæsar saw he had a very great advantage of the enemy; yet he would make no use on't, lest he should be reproached with a treacherous proceeding.

He always used to wear rich accoutrements, and of a shining colour, in battle, that he might be the more remarkable, and better observed.

He always carried a stricter hand over his soldiers, and kept them closer in, when near the enemy.

When the ancient Greeks would accuse any one of insufficiency they would say, in common proverb, "That he could neither read nor swim;" he was of the same opinion, that

swimming was of great use in war, and himself found it so; for being to use diligence he commonly swam over the rivers in his way; for he loved to march on foot, as did the great Alexander. Being in Egypt forced, to save himself, to go into a little boat, and so many people leaping in with him that it was in danger of sinking, he chose rather to commit himself to the sea, and swam to his fleet, which lay two hundred paces off, holding in his left hand his tablets out of the water, and drawing his coat-armour in his teeth, that it might not fall into the enemy's hand; yet he was then at a pretty advanced age.

Never had any general so much credit with his soldiers; in the beginning of the civil wars his centurions offered him to find every one a man-at-arms at his own charge, and the foot soldiers to serve him at their own expense; those who were better off, moreover, undertaking to defray the most necessitous. The late Mons. de Chastillon[1] showed us the like example in our civil war; for the French of his army furnished money out of their own purses to pay the strangers that were with them. There are but rarely found examples of so ardent and so ready an affection amongst the soldiers of elder times, who kept themselves strictly to their rules of war; passion has a more absolute command over us than reason; and yet it happened in the war against Hannibal that, following the example of the Romans in the city, the soldiers and captains refused their pay in the army; and in Marcellus's camp those were branded with the name of mercenaries who would receive any. Having come by the worse near Dyrrachium, his soldiers came and offered themselves to be chastised and punished, so that there was more need to comfort than reprove them. One single cohort of his withstood four of Pompey's legions above four hours together, till they were almost all killed with arrows; so that there were a hundred and thirty thousand shafts found in the trench; a

[1] Gaspard de Coligny, the second of that name, Count de Coligny and Seigneur de Châtillon-sur-Loing, Admiral of France, assassinated 24th August, 1572, (the St. Bartholomew.)

soldier called Scæva, who commanded at one of the avenues, invincibly maintained his ground, having lost an eye, and with one shoulder and one thigh shot through, and his shield pierced in two hundred and thirty places. Many of his soldiers being taken prisoners, rather chose to die than promise to take the contrary side. Granius Petronius, being taken by Scipio in Africa, Scipio having put his companions to death sent him word that he gave him his life, for he was a man of quality and questor; to whom Petronius sent answer back that Cæsar's soldiers were accustomed to give others their lives, and not to receive it, and immediately with his own hand killed himself.

Fidelity of the garrison of Salona.

Of their fidelity there are infinite examples; amongst which that which was done by those who were besieged in Salona, a city that stood for Cæsar against Pompey, is not, for a rare accident that there happened, to be forgot. Marcus Octavius kept them close besieged; they within being reduced to the extremest necessity of all things, so that, to supply the want of men, most of them being either slain or wounded, they had manumitted all their slaves, and had been constrained to cut off all the women's hair to make strings, besides a wonderful dearth of victuals, and yet they continued resolute never to yield. After having drawn the siege to a great length, by which Octavius was grown more negligent and less attentive to his enterprise, they made choice of one day about noon; and having first placed the women and children upon the walls, to make a show, sallied upon the besiegers with such fury that, having routed the first, second, and third corps of guards, and afterwards the fourth and all the rest, and beaten them all out of their trenches, they pursued them even to their ships, and Octavius himself was fain to fly to Dyrrachium, where Pompey lay. I do not remember that I have met with any other example where the besieged ever gave the besiegers a total defeat, and won the field; nor that a sally ever arrived at the consequence of a pure and entire victory of battle.

not enough to make a man revive out of spite, that she who spit in my face whilst I was, shall come to kiss my feet when I am no more? If there be any honour in lamenting a husband, it only appertains to those who smiled upon them whilst they had them; let those who wept during their lives laugh at their death, as well outwardly as within. Moreover, never regard those blubbered eyes, and that pitiful voice; but consider her port, her complexion, and the plumpness of her cheeks, under all those formal veils; 'tis there she speaks out. There are few who do not mend upon't, and health is a quality that cannot lie. That starched and ceremonious countenance looks not so much back as forward, and is rather intended to get a new husband than to lament the old. When I was a boy, a very beautiful and virtuous lady, who is yet living, and the widow of a prince, had I know not what more ornament in her dress than our laws of widowhood will well allow; which being reproached withal, as a great indecency, she made answer, "That it was because she was resolved to have no more lovers, and would never marry again."

I have here, not to differ from our customs, made choice of three women, who also employed the utmost of their goodness and affection about their husbands' deaths; yet are they examples of another kind than are now in use, and such as will hardly be drawn into imitation.

The younger Pliny had, near a house of his in Italy, a neighbour who was exceedingly tormented with certain ulcers in his private parts. His wife, seeing him so long to languish, entreated that he would give her leave to see, and at leisure to consider of the condition of his disease, and that she would freely tell him what she thought. This permission being obtained, and she having curiously examined the business, found it impossible he could ever be cured, and that all he was to hope for or expect was a great while to linger out a painful and miserable life, and, therefore, as the most sure and sovereign remedy, resolutely advised him to kill himself; and finding him a little tender and backward in so rough an

ers, after having first employed all the reasons and exhortations which she thought most prevailing to persuade him to it, she snatched the poniard he wore, from his side, and holding it ready in her hand for the conclusion of her admonitions: "Do thus, Pætus," said she, in the same instant giving herself a mortal stab in the breast, and then drawing it out of the wound presented it to him, ending her life with this noble, generous, and immortal saying: *Pæte, non dolet*, "Pætus, it is not painful;" having strength only to pronounce these three never-to-be-forgotten words:—[1]

Casta suo gladium cum traderet Arria Pæto,
Quem de visceribus traxerat ipsa suis;
Si qua fides, vulnus quod feci non dolet, inquit,
Sed quod tu facies, id mihi, Pæte, dolet:[2]

"When the chaste Arria gave the reeking sword,
That had new gor'd her heart, to her dear lord;
Pætus, the wound I've made hurts not, quoth she;
The wound which thou wilt make 'tis that hurts me:"

the action was much more noble in itself, and of a braver sense than the poet could express it; for she was so far from being deterred by her husband's wound and death, and her own, that she had been the promotress, and had given the advice; but, having performed this high and courageous enterprise for her husband's convenience only, she had even in the last gasp of her life no other concern but for him, and of dispossessing him of the fear of dying with her. Pætus presently struck himself to the heart with the same weapon, ashamed, I should think, to have stood in need of so dear and precious an example.

Seneca's wife.

Pompeia Paulina, a young and very noble Roman lady, had married Seneca in his extreme old age. Nero, his fine pupil, sent his guards to him to denounce the sentence of death; which was performed after this manner; when the Roman emperors of those times had condemned any man of quality, they sent to him by their officers to choose what death he would, and to execute it

[1] Pliny, *Ep.* iii. 16. [2] Mart. i. 14.

within such or such a time, which was limited, according to the mettle of their indignation, to a shorter or a longer respite, that they might therein have better leisure to put their affairs in order, and sometimes depriving them of the means of doing it by the shortness of the time; and if the condemned seemed unwilling to submit to the order, they had people ready at hand to execute it, either by cutting the veins of the arms and legs, or by compelling them by force to swallow a draught of poison. But persons of honour would not stay this necessity, but made use of their own physicians and surgeons for the purpose. Seneca with a calm and steady countenance heard the charge, and presently called for paper to write his will, which being by the captain denied, he turned himself towards his friends, saying to them: "Since I cannot leave you any other acknowledgment of the obligation I have to you, I leave you at least the best thing I have, namely, the image of my life and manners, which I entreat you to keep in memory of me; that so doing you may acquire the glory of sincere and real friends." And therewithal, one while appeasing the sorrow he saw them in with gentle words, and presently raising his voice to reprove them: "What," said he, "are become of all our brave philosophical precepts? what are become of all the provisions we have so many years laid up against the accidents of fortune? Was Nero's cruelty unknown to us? What could we expect from him, who murdered his mother and brother, but that he should put his tutor to death, who had taught and bred him?" After having spoken these words in general, he turned himself towards his wife, and embracing her fast in his arms, as, her heart and strength failing her, she was ready to sink down with grief, he begged of her for his sake to bear this event with a little more patience, telling her that now the hour was come wherein he was to show, not by argument and discourse, but by effect, the fruit he had acquired by his studies; and that he really embraced his death, not only without grief, but moreover with exceeding joy: "wherefore,

my dearest," said he, "do not dishonour it with thy tears, that it may not seem as if thou lovest thyself more than my reputation; moderate thy grief, and comfort thyself in the knowledge thou hast had of me and of my actions, leading the remainder of thy life in the same virtuous manner thou hast hitherto done." To which Paulina, having a little recovered her spirits, and warmed her magnanimity with the heat of a most generous affection, replied: "No, Seneca, I am not a woman to suffer you to go alone in such a necessity: I will not have you to think that the virtuous examples of your life have not yet taught me how to die; and when can I ever better, or more becomingly, do it, or more to my own desire, than with you? and therefore assure yourself I will go along with you." Then Seneca, taking this noble and generous resolution of his wife in good part, and also willing to free himself from the fear of leaving her exposed to the mercy and cruelty of his enemies after his death: "I have, Paulina," said he, "sufficiently instructed thee in what would serve thee happily to live; but thou more covetest, I see, the honour of dying; in truth, I will not grudge it thee; the constancy and resolution in our common end are the same, but the beauty and glory of thy part is much greater." Which being said, the surgeons at the same time opened the veins of both their arms; but those of Seneca being more shrunk up, as well with age as abstinence, making his blood to flow more slowly, he moreover commanded them to open the veins of his thighs; and lest the torments he endured might intimidate his wife's heart, and also to free himself from the affliction of seeing her in so sad a condition, after having taken a very affectionate leave of her, he entreated she would suffer them to carry her into her chamber, which they accordingly did. But all these incisions being not yet enough to make him die, he commanded Statius Anneus, his physician, to give him a draught of poison, which had not much better effect; for, by reason of the weakness and coldness of his limbs, it could not arrive to his heart; wherefore

they were forced to superadd a very hot bath, and then feeling his end approach, whilst he had breath, he continued excellent discourses upon the subject of his present condition, which the secretaries wrote down so long as they could hear his voice; and his last words were long after in high honour and esteem among men (it was a great loss to us that they were not reserved down to our times). Then, feeling the last pangs of death, with the bloody water of the bath he sprinkled his head, saying, "This water I dedicate to Jupiter the Deliverer." Nero, being presently advertised of all this, fearing lest the death of Paulina, who was one of the best descended ladies of Rome, and against whom he had no particular unkindness, should turn to his reproach, he sent back orders in all haste to bind up her wounds, which his people did without her knowledge; she being already half dead, and without any manner of sense. Thus, though she lived, contrary to her own design, it was very honourably, and according to her own virtue, her pale complexion ever after manifesting how much life was run from her veins.[1]

The writers of tragedy must have recourse to history for the subject of their plays.

These are my three very true stories, which I find as entertaining and as tragic as any of those we make of our own heads, wherewith to entertain the common people; and I wonder they who undertake such matters do not rather cull out ten thousand very fine stories, which are to be found in very good authors, that would save them the trouble of invention, and be more useful and diverting; and he who would make a collection of them would need to add nothing of his own but the connection only, as it were the solder of another metal; and by this means embody a great many true events of all sorts, disposing and diversifying them according as the beauty of the work should require, after the same manner almost as Ovid has made up his *Metamorphoses*, of the infinite number of various fables.[2]

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.* xv. 64.

[2] In the edition of 1588 Montaigne added—"or as Ariosto has arranged in succession so many different fables;" but he afterwards omitted this passage, probably because he has here in view only serious relations, whereas those of Ariosto are mostly comic.

In this last couple this is moreover worthy of consideration, that Paulina voluntarily offered to lose her life for the love of her husband, and that her husband had formerly also forborne to die for the love of her. According to our notions, there is no just counterpoise in this exchange; but, according to his stoical humour, I should say he thought he had done as much for her in prolonging his life upon her account as if he had died for her. In one of his letters to Lucilius,[1] after he has given him to understand that, being seized with a fever at Rome, he presently took coach to go to a house he had in the country, contrary to his wife's opinion, who would by all means persuade him to stay; and that he told her, "That the ague he was seized with was not a fever of the body, but the place," he goes on thus: "She let me go," says he, "giving me a strict charge of my health. Now I, who know that her life is involved in mine, begin to make much of myself, that I may preserve her; and I lose the privilege my age has given me, of being more constant and resolute in many things, when I call to mind that in this old fellow there is a young girl who is interested in his health. And since I cannot persuade her to love me more courageously, she makes me more solicitously to love myself; for we must allow something to honest affections; and sometimes, though occasions importune us to the contrary, we must call back life, even though it be with torment; we must hold the soul fast in our teeth, since the rule of living amongst good men is not so long as they please, but as long as they ought. He that loves not his wife or his friend so well as to prolong his life for them, but will obstinately die, is too delicate and too effeminate; the soul must impose this upon itself when the utility of our friends so requires; we must sometimes lend ourselves to our friends, and when we would die for ourselves must break that resolution for them. 'Tis a testimony of grandeur and courage to return to life for the consideration of another, as many excel-

Seneca's great affection to his wife.

[1] Ep. 104.

lent persons have done; and 'tis a mark of singular good nature to preserve old age (of which the greatest convenience is the indifferency as to its duration, and a more stout and disdainful use of life), when a man perceives that this office is pleasing, agreeable, and useful to some person by whom we are very much beloved. And a man reaps by it a very pleasing reward; for what can be more delightful to be so dear to his wife, as upon her account to become dear to himself. Thus has my Paulina loaded me not only with her own fears, but my own; it has not been sufficient to consider how resolutely I could die, but I have also considered how irresolutely she would bear my death. I am enforced to live, and sometimes to live is magnanimity." These are his own words, excellent as they everywhere are.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OF THE MOST EXCELLENT MEN.

SHOULD I be asked my opinion and choice of all the men who have come to my knowledge, I should make answer that, methinks, I find three more excellent than all the rest.

One of them Homer; not that Aristotle or Varro, for example, were not perhaps as learned as he; nor that possibly Virgil was not equal to him in his own art; which I leave to be determined by such as know them both, and are best able to judge. I who, for my part, understand but one of them, can only say this, according to my poor talent, that I do not believe the muses themselves could go beyond the Roman:—

> Tale facit carmen docta testudine, quale
> Cynthius impositis temperat articulus: [1]
>
> "Whilst, playing to his lute, he verse doth sing,
> 'Tis like Apollo's voice and fingering:"

[1] Propert. ii. 34, 79.

and yet in this judgment we are not to forget that it is chiefly from Homer that Virgil derives his excellence; that he is his guide and teacher; and that one portion of the *Iliad* only has supplied him with body and matter out of which to compose his great and divine *Æneid*. I do not count that way; I mix several other circumstances that render this poet admirable to me, even as it were above human condition; and, in truth, I often wonder that he who has erected, and by his authority given, so many deities reputation in the world, was not deified himself. Being blind and poor, living before the sciences were reduced to rule and certain observation, he was so well acquainted with them that all those who have since taken upon them to establish governments, to carry on wars, and to write either of religion or philosophy, of what sect soever, or of the arts, have made use of him as of a most perfect instructor in the knowledge of all things, and of his books as of an inexhaustible treasure of all sorts of learning:—

Qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius ac melius Chrysippo ac Crantore dicit;[1]

"Who what is base, what pure, what brave, what good,
Fuller than Crantor or Chrysippus showed;"

and as this other says,

A quo, ceu fonte perenni,
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis;[2]

"From whose ne'er-failing spring the poet sips,
And in Pierian waters wets his lips;"

and the other,

Adde Heliconiadum comites, quorum unus Homerus,
Sceptra potitus;[3]

"Of all the muses' friends, Homer alone
Is judg'd most worthy of the poet's throne;"

and the other,

Cujusque ex ore profuso
Omnis posteritas latices in carmina duxit,

[1] Horace, *Ep.* i. 2, 3.
[2] Ovid, *Amor.* iii. 9, 25.
[3] Lucret. iii. 1050.

Amnemque in tenues ausa est deducere rivos,
Unius fœcunda bonis.[1]

"From whose abundant spring
Succeeding poets draw the songs they sing;
From him they take, from him adorn their themes,
And into little channels cut his streams;
Rich in his store."

'Tis contrary to the order of nature, that he has made the most excellent production that can possibly be; for the ordinary birth of things is imperfect; they usually thrive and gather strength by growing; whereas he has rendered the infancy of poetry and several other sciences mature, perfect, and accomplished at first. And for this reason he may be called the first and the last of poets, according to the noble testimony antiquity has left us of him: "That as there was none before him whom he could imitate, so there has been none since that could imitate him."[2] His words, according to Aristotle,[3] are the only words that have motion and action; the only substantial words. Alexander the Great, having found a rich cabinet amongst Darius's spoils, gave order it should be reserved for him to keep his Homer in;[4] saying, "That he was the best and most faithful counsellor he had in his military affairs."[5] For the same reason it was that Cleomenes, the son of Anaxandridas, said, "That he was the poet of the Lacedemonians, for he was the best master in the discipline of war."[6] This singular and particular commendation is also left of him in the judgment of Plutarch:[7] "That he is the only author in the world that never glutted nor disgusted his readers, presenting himself always another thing, and always flourishing in some new grace." That wanton Alcibiades, having asked one who pretended to learning for a book of Homer, gave him a box on the ear because he had none, which he thought as scandalous as we should to take one of our priests without a breviary. Xenophanes complained

[1] Manil. ii. 8.
[2] Vell. Paterculus, i. 5.
[3] *Poetics*, c. 24.
[4] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii 29.
[5] Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, c. 2.
[6] Id. *Apothegms of the Lacedem.*
[7] In his treatise, *on Speaking too much*, c. 5.

one day to Hiero, the tyrant of Syracuse, that he was so poor he had not wherewithal to maintain two servants. "What!" replied the tyrant, "Homer, who was much poorer than you are, keeps above ten thousand, though he is dead!"[1] What did Panætius leave unsaid, when he called Plato "the Homer of philosophers?"[2] Besides, what glory can be compared to his? Nothing is so frequent in men's mouths as his name and works; nothing so known and received as Troy, Helen, and the war about her, when perhaps there was really never any such thing. Our children are called by names that he feigned above three thousand years ago; who knows not Hector and Achilles? Not only some particular families, but most nations also, seek their origin in his inventions. Mahomet, the second of that name, Emperor of the Turks, writing to our Pope Pius the Second: "I am astonished," says he, "that the Italians should appear against me, considering that we have our common descent from the Trojans, and that it concerns me as well as it does them to revenge the blood of Hector upon the Greeks, whom they countenance against me."[3] Is it not a noble farce, wherein kings, republics, and emperors have so many ages played their parts, and to which the vast universe serves for a theatre? Seven Grecian cities contended for his birth, so much honour even his obscurity helped him to!

Smyrna, Rhodos, Colophon, Salamis, Chios, Argos, Athenæ.[4]

"By Smyrna, Rhodes, Colophon, Salamis,
Chios, Argos, and Athens, he claim'd is."

Alexander the Great.

The other is Alexander the Great; for whoever will consider the age at which he began his enterprises, the small means by which he effected so glorious a design; the authority he obtained at so tender an age, with the greatest and most experienced captains of the world,

[1] Plutarch, *Apotheg. of the Kings.*
[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 32.
[3] "See," says Bayle (article *Acarnania*), "how chimerical evils, forged by poets, have served as an apology for real evils." This letter of Mahomet's was probably written by some renegade Greek, or, more probably still, invented by some imaginative historian."
[4] Politian, *Manto.*

by whom he was followed; the extraordinary favour wherewith fortune embraced him, and favoured so many hazardous, not to say rash designs;

Impellens quicquid sibi summa petenti
Obstaret, gnadensque viam fecisse ruina; [1]

"Whose high designs no hostile force could stay,
And who by ruin lov'd to clear his way;"

that grandeur, to have, at the age of three and thirty years, passed victorious through the whole habitable earth, and in half a life to have attained to the utmost of what human nature can do; so that you cannot imagine the legitimate duration of his life, and the continuation of his increase in valour and fortune, even to a due maturity of age, but that you must withal imagine something more than man; to have so many royal branches to spring from his soldiers, leaving the world at his death divided amongst four successors, simple captains of his army, whose posterity afterwards so long continued and maintained that vast possession; so many excellent virtues as he was master of, justice, temperance, liberality, truth in his word, love towards his own people, and humanity towards those he overcame; for his manners in general seem, in truth, incapable of any manner of reproach, though some particular and extraordinary actions of his may perhaps fall under censure; but it is impossible to carry on such great things as he did, altogether within the strict rules of justice; such as he are to be judged in gross, by the main end of their actions; the ruin of Thebes and Persepolis, the murder of Menander and of Hæphestion's physician, the massacre of so many Persian prisoners at once, of a troop of Indian soldiers, not without prejudice to his word, and of the Cosseians, so much as to the very children, are indeed sallies that are not well to be excused; for, as to Clitus, the fault was more than recompensed in his repentance, and that very action, as much as any other whatever, manifests the sweetness of his nature, a nature most excellently formed to goodness; and it was

[1] Lucan, l. 149.

ingeniously said of him, "That he had his virtues by nature, and his vices by chance."[1] As to his being given a little to bragging, and a little too impatient of hearing himself ill spoken of; and as to those mangers, arms, and bits he caused to be strewed in the Indies,[2] all those little vanities methinks may very well be allowed to his youth and the prodigious prosperity of his fortune. And who will consider withal his so many military virtues, his diligence, foresight, patience, discipline, subtlety, magnanimity, resolution, and good fortune, wherein, though we had not the authority of Hannibal to assure us, he was the first of men; the admirable beauty and symmetry of his person, even to a miracle, his majestic port, and imposing deportment, in a face so young, so ruddy, and so radiant:—

> Qualis, ubi Oceani perfusus Lucifer unda,
> Quem Venus ante alios astrorum diligit ignes,
> Extulit os sacrum cœlo, tenebrasque resolvit;[3]
>
> "So doth the morning star from Ocean rise,
> Beyond all stars grateful to Venus' eyes,
> Shakes from his rosy locks the pearly dews,
> Dispels the darkness, and the day renews;"

The excellence of his knowledge and capacity, the duration and grandeur of his glory, pure, clean, without spot or envy, and that long after his death it was a religious belief that his very medals brought good fortune to all that carried them about them;[4] and that more kings and princes have written his acts than other historians have written the acts of any other king or prince whatever; and that to this very day the Mahometans, who despise all other histories, admit of and honour his alone, by a special privilege; whoever, I say, will seriously consider these particulars will confess that, all these things put together, I have reason to prefer him before Cæsar himself, who alone could make me doubtful in my choice; for it cannot be denied but that there was more of his own in

[1] Quintus Curtius, v. 1.
[2] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*.
[3] *Æneid*, viii. 589.
[4] Treb. Pollio, *Triginta Tyrann.* c. 14.

his exploits, more of fortune in those of Alexander. They were in many things equal, and perhaps Cæsar had the advantage in some particular qualities; they were two fires, or two torrents, to overrun the world by several ways;

> Et velut immissi diversa parte per agros
> Arentem in silvam, et virgulta sonantia lauro;
> Aut ubi decurrens rapido de montibus altis
> Dant sonitum spumosi amnes, et in æquora currunt,
> Quisque suum populatus iter:

> "And like to fires in several parts applied
> To a dry grove of crackling laurel's side;
> Or like the cataracts of foaming rills,
> That tumble headlong from the lofty hills,
> To hasten to the ocean; even so
> They bear down all before them where they go:"

but though Cæsar's ambition had been more moderate, it would still be so unhappy, having the ruin of his country and the universal mischief to the world for its abominable object, that, all things collected together and put into a balance, I must needs incline to Alexander's side.

Epaminondas.

The third, and in my opinion the most excellent of all, is Epaminondas. Of glory he has not near so much as the other two (which also is but a part of the substance of the thing); of valour and resolution, not of that sort which is pushed on by ambition, but of that which wisdom and reason can raise in a regular soul, he had all that could be imagined. Of this virtue of his he has, in my thought, given as ample proof, as either Alexander himself or Cæsar; for although his war exploits were neither so frequent nor so renowned, they were yet, if duly considered in all their circumstances, as important, as bravely fought, and carried with them as manifest testimony of valour and military conduct as those of any whatever. The Greeks have done him the honour, without contradiction, to pronounce him the greatest man of their nation;[2] and to be

[1] *Æneid*, xii. 521.

[2] Diod. Sic. xv. 88. Pausanias, viii 2, &c. Cicero, also, *de Orat.* iii. 54, assigns him the same place.

the first of Greece is easily to be the first of the world. As to his knowledge, we have this ancient judgment of him, "That never any man knew so much, and spoke so little as he;"[1] for he was of the Pythagorean sect; but, when he did speak, never man spoke better; an excellent orator, and of powerful insinuation. But as to his manners and conscience, he infinitely surpassed all men that ever undertook the management of affairs; for in this one thing, which ought chiefly to be considered, which alone denotes what we are, and which alone I counterbalance with all the rest put together, he comes not short of any philosopher whatever, not even of Socrates himself; innocence in him is a quality, peculiar, sovereign, constant, uniform, incorruptible; compared to which, it appears in Alexander subject to something else, uncertain, variable, effeminate, and accidental.

Antiquity has judged that in thoroughly sifting all the other great captains, there is found in every one some peculiar quality that illustrates his name; in this man alone there is a full and equal virtue throughout, that leaves nothing to be wished for in him, whether in private or public employment, whether in peace or war, whether gloriously to live or die. I do not know any form or fortune of man that I so much honour and love.

'Tis true that I look upon his obstinate poverty, as it is set out by his best friends, as a little too scrupulous and nice; and this is the only action, though high in itself and well worthy of admiration, that I find so severe as not to desire to imitate myself, to the degree it was in him.

Scipio Æmilianus the only one to be compared with him.

Scipio Æmilianus alone, could one give him as brave and magnificent an end and as profound and universal a knowledge, might be put into the other scale of the balance. Oh! what an injury has time done me, to deprive me of the sight of two of the most noble lives, which, by the common consent of all the world, one *the greatest* of the Greeks, and the other of the Romans,

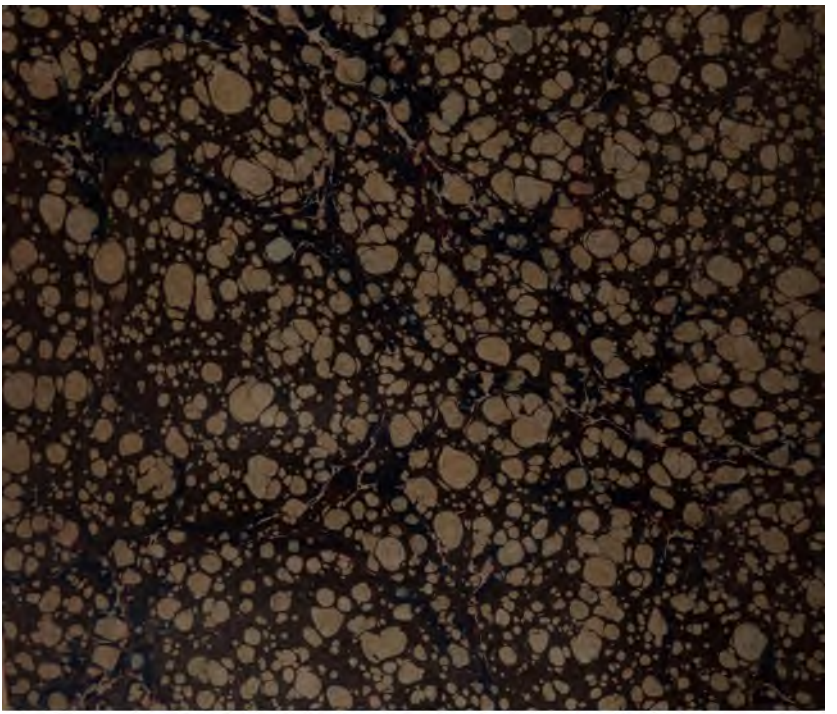
1 Plutarch, *On the Dæmon of Socrates*, c. 28.

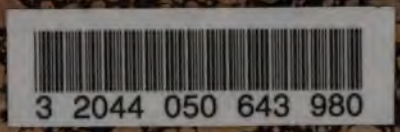
were in all Plutarch. What materials! What a workman!

For a man that was no saint, but, as we say, a gallant man, of civil and ordinary manners, and of a moderate ambition, the richest life that I know, and full of the richest and most to be desired parts, all things considered, is, in my opinion, that of Alcibiades.

But as to what concerns Epaminondas, I will here, as the example of an excessive goodness, add some of his opinions. He declared that the greatest satisfaction he ever had in his whole life was the contentment he gave his father and mother in his victory of Leuctra;[1] wherein he says very much, preferring their pleasure before his own, so just, and so full of so glorious an action. He did not think it lawful, even to restore the liberty of his country, to kill a man without knowing a cause;[2] which made him so cold in the enterprise of his companion Pelopidas, for the relief of Thebes. He was also of opinion that men in battle ought to avoid the encounter of a friend that was on the contrary side, and to spare him.[3] And his humanity, even towards his enemies themselves, having rendered him suspected by the Boetians, for that, after he had miraculously forced the Lacedemonians to open him the pass, which they had undertaken to defend at the entry of the Morea, near unto Corinth, he contented himself with having charged through them, without pursuing them to the utmost, he had his commission of general taken from him, very honourably upon such an account, and for the shame it was to them, soon after, upon necessity, to restore him to his command, and to acknowledge how much upon him depended their safety and honour; victory like a shadow attending him wherever he went; and indeed the prosperity of his country, as being from him derived, died with him.[4]

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Coriolanus*, c. 2.
[2] Id. *On the Dæmon of Socrates*, c. 4.
[3] Id. *ib.* c. 17.
[4] Diod. Sic. xv. 88. Nepos, *in Vitâ*, c. 10. Justin, vi. 8.

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